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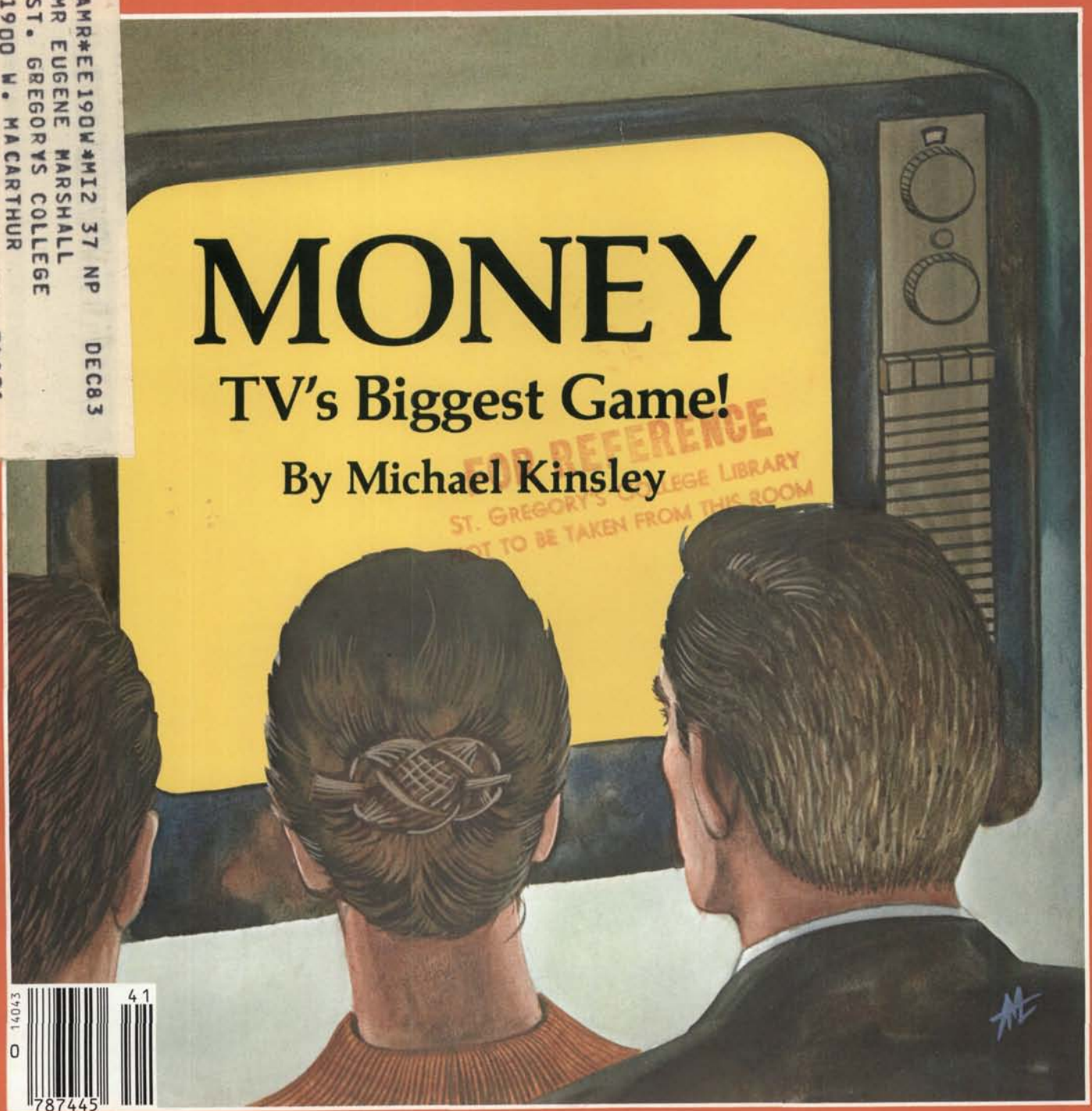

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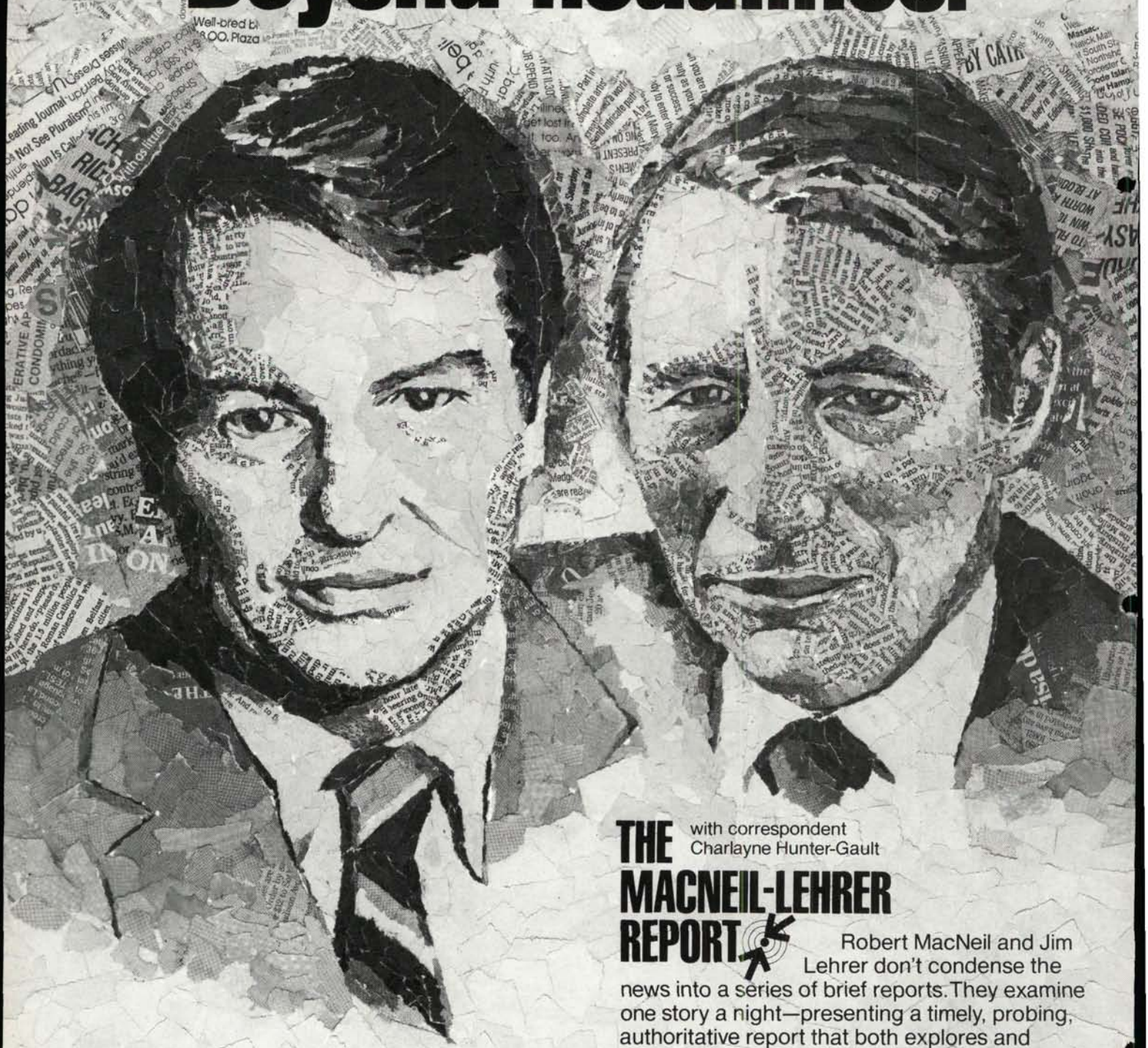

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Balancing Act

There was an enticing full-page ad in the *New York Times* two weeks ago, just before the fiscal new year. It was placed by the Emigrant Savings Bank and told how generous the government is to investors with the new "tax shelter certificates." There were tables of juicy concessions. All you needed for benefits was a good income—the bigger the better. The top listing on the table was $60,000 (1982 net taxable income). If you qualified, you could spare yourself 31.9 percent in taxes. Neat, eh? Of course, if your net taxable income was only $40,000, you'd get less, a savings of a mere 27.4 percent. But every little bit helps. Furthermore, the certificates are tax-free for state and city taxpayers. And the benevolent federal government insures you up to $100,000. Step right up to the counter, you fortunate affluent—no crowding, please—and buy your "All Savers Tax Shelter Certificates" from warm-hearted Uncle Sam. He's having his tax-cut bargain sale.

But October 1 wasn't such a nice day for some people. That's the date set for a lot of the tax and budget cuts proposed by Reagan and voted by an acquiescent Congress. If you cut taxes for some people and add to defense spending at the same time, you have to find the money somewhere else. A whole lot of people whose net taxable income is under $60,000 feel the pinch. Food stamps end for 1.1 million recipients. Some 700,000 families lose all or part of their welfare benefits. Some 900,000 workers who would have had public service jobs or job training positions won't get them. School lunch prices will be higher and the portions smaller. (Senator John Melcher, Democrat of Montana, who has five children, told the Senate recently about his experience in sampling a school lunch. It was built around what he called a repulsive "little patty of goop.")

There were scores of other cuts. A million and a half unemployed workers now insured for 26 weeks won't get an extra 13 weeks of benefits. Government programs received sweeping slashes: Medicaid; housing assistance; Aid to Families With Dependent Children; legal services for the poor; supplemental feeding for mothers, infants, and children. We must retrench, balance the budget, end inflation. The total national debt for the first time is a trillion dollars. Who can reject sacrifices at a moment like this? Even the man who saves the equivalent of 31.9 percent on his taxes in the $60,000 income bracket must accept the burden; he will lose any chance at food stamps, and he will find the weeks of federal insurance reduced if he becomes unemployed.

How did we ever get into this mess, and what should we do about it? It's easier to try the first question. The United States has been living beyond its means. This shows up in the budget. In the last 60 years the Treasury has been in the black only 14 times, and the last balanced budget was Johnson's in 1969. A nation can live on credit for a while; it goes into the market to borrow as prices rise. Recently the Treasury has been elbowing everybody else out of the way in a competition for funds which sends interest rates up. The current interest rate, at about 19 percent, is preposterous. In the last two years the Treasury has borrowed $80 billion. America is living on a credit card. Has a crunch come?

I watched the drama here last week. Sometimes it had a frightening resemblance to October 29, 1929: that's when the Coolidge-Hoover market fell out of bed. I found myself in a big wood-paneled hearing room of the Senate Budget Committee with motion picture cameras and Chairman Pet Domenici, Republican of New Mexico, asking gloomy questions of three Wall Street money-manager types who didn't know what was happening but who loved Reagan. "Frankly I'm scared," said John Exon, Democrat of Nebraska.

All the drama was up in New York, in the quarter-mile canyon of Wall Street. The week before, Reagan had attempted to reassure the nation with his fifth prime-time statement of economic policy—and the stock market fell 11.13 points. Like a leaky balloon, the stock market lost $255 billion in paper value between April and September, and the bond market perhaps more. This has not happened often. On my way back to the office I stopped at a brokerage house. The abbreviated quotations flowed across the board in green lights. And lo, something had happened. Markets had crashed that morning in London and Tokyo in fulfillment of doom-caller Joseph Granville's prediction that the end of the world was at hand. But he was as wrong as the political pundits who elected Dewey in 1948. When the market opened on Wall Street, it promptly dropped 14 points. Then it turned around. By day's end it was up 18.55. (If it had done that for poor old Herbert Hoover on Blue Tuesday, 1929, we might not have had the Depression!) Where it goes now I don't know.

That leaves us with the bigger question: what does America do now at this critical and volatile crisis? The Reagan budget is tilted brutally against the poor. The 13th and final report of the National Advisory Council of Economic Opportunity (just abolished as an economy move by Reagan) estimates there are 25 million American "poor" and 30 million "near poor." In the October 5 *Newsweek*, MIT economist Lester Thurow sees income inequality growing in America. Hitherto the poorest fifth of the population got somewhere around four percent of the nation's income and the top five percent about a fifth. The ratio remained about the same for years. Now Thurow sees a "period of rising inequality." In the past, government "was committed to combating inequality." Now, he thinks, poverty is seen as a spur, an incentive: "Inequality is being touted as a positive good."

What's the solution? Everybody agrees the budget should be balanced, but why balance it on school lunches? Senator Ted Kennedy asks, why not "repeal the new $33-billion tax break for the oil companies?" Indeed, why not repeal some of the gaping loopholes in the tax law? There are places where the country can raise money: a windfall tax on natural gas if it is decontrolled; a possible import tax on petroleum, with rebates for worker-drivers. The fiscal year has just started and the new battle in Congress just begun.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 14, 1981

OUT ON A LIMB

Q. In the past four or five weeks, some Democrats have made a great to-do about the large deficits. Do you feel they are walking into a trap?

A. Absolutely. They are setting up, to some degree, the case that I've been trying to articulate. Perhaps it is not yet fully comprehended. We cannot fund the Great Society. Substantial parts of it will have to be heaved overboard. To the extent that they make the deficit an issue politically, they're sawing off the limb.

That's David Stockman talking, in an interview with the *National Journal*, and it ought to be fair warning to liberals in Congress. They are being dangerously shortsighted in seizing upon Ronald Reagan's projected budget deficits as a means of discrediting his economic program. Some of them, including Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, Gary Hart of Colorado, and Bill Bradley of New Jersey, and Representatives David Obey of Wisconsin and Morris Udall of Arizona, hope to use the big-deficit argument as a political lever to roll back part of the massive tax cut. Others hope to use the deficit figures to pry out some reductions in defense spending. To a limited extent, these efforts may succeed. Even Ronald Reagan, after all, is recommending some token tax loophole closings, increased user fees, and defense trims. Congressional Republicans are likely to demand a bit more deficit reduction at the expense of the defense budget. But ultimately, to whatever extent there is a consensus in Congress that a fiscal 1982 deficit of $65 billion is intolerable and that the fiscal 1984 budget must be balanced, the pressure will be on to help Mr. Stockman achieve his political (as distinct from economic) goal: to throw overboard "substantial parts" of the Great Society. And this time there's no safety net out there to catch them.

In fact, the budget deficits now projected, although hardly desirable, are not all that staggering if seen as a percentage of projected GNP. It used to be that liberal Democrats paid attention to such ratios, while conservatives shouted about the gross size of the federal budget and the deficits. Some conservatives still do, including President Reagan, who on television the other week repeated his old chicken-circuit litany about the growth of federal spending. Mercy, he said, "it took about 170 years for the federal budget to reach $100 billion. That was in 1962. It took only eight years to reach the $200 billion mark and only five more to make it $300 billion. In the next five years, we nearly doubled that." He neglected to mention, of course, that the GNP nearly doubled between 1960 and 1970, doubled again by 1978, and will be up to four trillion dollars by 1984. If you inquire at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, of all places, economists will tell you that federal deficits have been averaging between two and four percent of the GNP for the last six years. For fiscal 1982, a $60-billion deficit will be under two percent. For 1984, the pessimistic projections available are that the deficit will be $100 billion. Even that would be only 2.5 percent of probable GNP.

We are not making a case for wild spending. But we caution Democrats against going too far out on Mr. Stockman's budget-balancing limb. Ronald Reagan probably believes in balanced budgets because they are part of good, old-time America, along with John Wayne's six-guns and docile, nonunion labor. But putting balanced budgets at the center of the debate has a nasty conservative side effect. It gets the country behind further cutbacks in social services, in the belief that inflicting pain on the poor, regrettable though it may be, is necessary for the national good. Mr. Reagan

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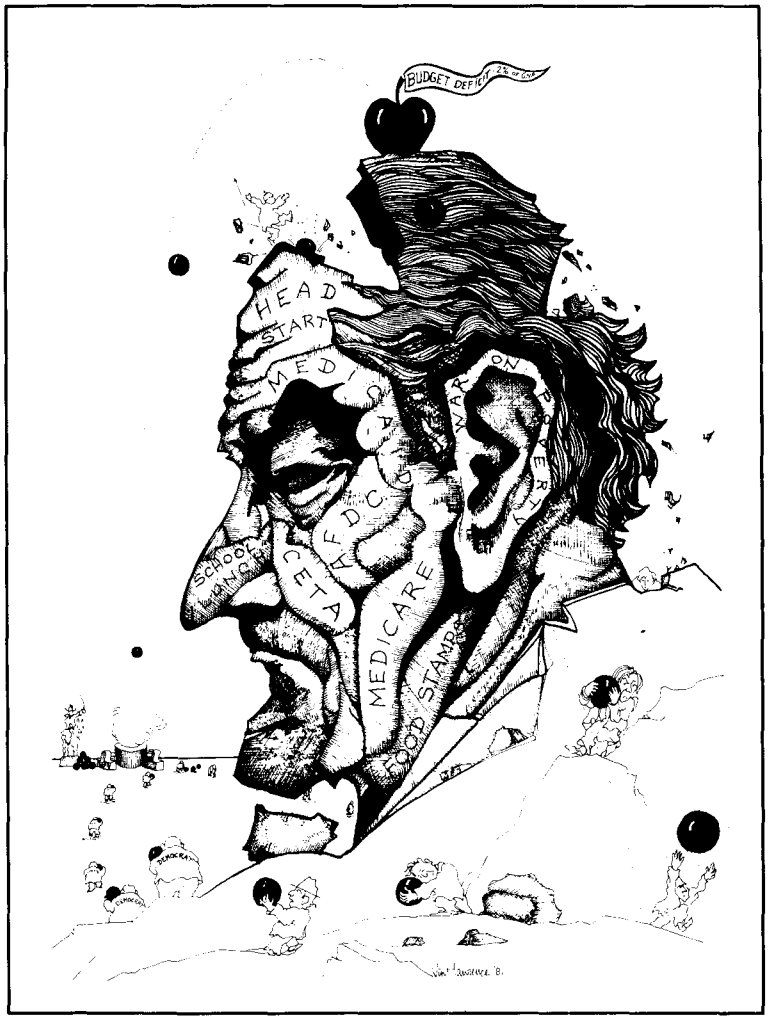
is setting the stage for a full-scale political battle with Congress—the Democrats especially. If Congress does not give him the cuts he wants, he will use the presidential veto. The probability that Congress will not be able to override him becomes a certainty if Democrats are joining Republicans in saying that what's needed above all is a balanced budget.

What should the Democrats do? Well, they should not do what House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill initially suggested, which is to stand by while Mr. Reagan stews in his own economic juice. In the short run the temptation to do this will be great, because things look so grim for Mr. Reagan at the moment: the stock market took another plunge after his economic address, Republicans back from the summer recess are nervous about the political effects of high interest rates, northeastern Republicans (the so-called "gypsy moths") are mumbling about not supporting further budget cuts, and the Republican leadership is expressing doubt that Mr. Reagan's Phase II can be enacted. But to stand by in the hope that Mr. Reagan will self-destruct is to leave the initiative wholly with him. It also puts the Democratic party in the position of wishing the economy ill. And, in the event that Reaganomics appears to be succeeding in November 1972, it will leave Democratic candidates with nothing to complain about.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Democrats' first task should be to expose Mr. Reagan's Phase II agenda for what it is: a further attack on the weakest people in American society. Mr. Reagan wants to cut just two billion dollars from the Pentagon, a tiny one percent reduction in a defense budget already fattened by more than $25 billion in prospective increases over last year. But he also seeks $8.4 billion in "across-the-board" slashes in domestic programs and $2.6 billion in what the White House calls "entitlements reform." The across-the-board cuts are represented by Mr. Reagan as inflicting equal reductions of 12 percent in all government programs. But Mr. Reagan's 12 percent refers to cuts below his original budget recommendations from March. As a proportion of the funding actually approved by Congress, the cuts will frequently be much deeper. For Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the Administration wants a cut of 34 percent below Congress's approved amount. For education aid for the handicapped, 29 percent. For student loans, 43 percent. For compensatory education for the poor, 29 percent.

Social Security has been spared from the cuts this year, but Democrats have little to be proud of here. Their demagoguery has made it impossible to make legitimate cost-of-living adjustments in the program. Social Security benefits are tied to the consumer price index, which exaggerates the actual rises in living costs borne by the elderly by overstating their housing costs. The government should scale back the rate of increases, but the Democrats made it seem a crime against humanity, scared old people into thinking they would suffer actual reductions in their benefits, and caused Republicans to skitter away from the President's proposals. So what does Mr. Reagan intend to do? He will cut deeper into entitlements programs that primarily help the poor (as opposed to middle-class Social Security recipients), including AFDC, housing assistance, and Medicaid.

Eventually benefit reductions will have to come to Social Security, although President Reagan was reluctant to admit the fact. He pretended that it was possible to make the system solvent by imposing a onetime postponement of benefit increases, and that such a quick, painless fix "would have solved the short- and long-range problems of Social Security once and for all." This is Reagan demagoguery fully as distasteful as the Democrats'. If, as Mr. Reagan says, the Social Security system is close to bankruptcy, it will take more than "a few changes" to make it solvent. We have

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little hope that it will come to pass, but it's time for both parties to stop fooling the country on this issue and be frank about the necessary remedies. Probably the retirement age is going to have to be extended for most workers. The two parties should try to work out a phasing in of this extension and stop pointing fingers at each other.

The Democrats should not be recommending—as some are—a delay or repeal of Mr. Reagan's individual tax cuts while corporate tax cuts remain in force. Nor should they call for repeal of indexation of taxes to protect taxpayers from inflation as some are doing. A Democratic tax plan should include true "across-the-board" tax cuts—that is, cuts not skewed (as Mr. Reagan's are) to the rich. And it should include indexing, which protects ordinary taxpayers against inflation.

Beyond this, the Democrats should develop a positive program for revising Reaganomics. Not to balance the budget, but for reasons of equity and good government management—and to make it possible to restore social programs slated for the ax—the Democrats should be calling for closure of such tax loopholes as depletion allowances and write-offs of intangible drilling costs by oil companies (worth $3.7 billion in fiscal 1982), capital gains preferences for collectibles and other nonproductive investments (three billion dollars), and business entertaining (a 50 percent reduction would save one billion dollars).

The Democrats should also favor a far more moderate increase in defense spending. More important, they should begin to educate the public about the difference between defense spending and defense—as some of them (notably Senator Hart) have already started to do. The Republicans are making precisely the same mistake about defense that the Democrats made for so long about social betterment: they are equating the solution of a problem with the creation of a huge, money-throwing, self-perpetuating bureaucratic machine named after it. A sensible defense policy—one that builds weapons that are workable, reliable, and (relatively) cheap instead of overcomplicated, breakable, and wildly expensive; that eschews absurdities like the MX; and that concentrates on training, maintenance, and readiness rather than on mindless procurement—would yield dramatically more military effectiveness for the same pile of dollars. If it seems strange to suggest that the heirs of McGovern could become the party of national security in the next election, consider that the heirs of Hoover became the party of economic security in the last one.

We can't deny taking a certain pleasure in watching the Reaganites squirm under the criticism of the financial community and other conservative constituencies. But the Democrats would be ill advised to rely on Wall Street for their salvation. For one thing, the bulk of Reagan's corporate and individual tax cuts won't come until July 1982—just in time to give the economy a kick before the November elections. So to be successful politically, the Democratic party will have to have an alternative program that is both compassionate and realistic. That program should be one based on tax cuts and modest budget cuts—but cuts which, in both cases, attempt to allocate pleasure and pain equitably throughout the society. With such a plan firmly established, the Democratic party can go before the electorate and accuse the Republicans of being the party of the rich. It will be the honest truth, but it will also be convincing.

Exclusionary Justice

In 1957 three Cleveland police officers acted on an anonymous tip and forcibly entered the home of Dollree Mapp and her 15-year-old daughter, looking for evidence in a recent bombing incident. Finding no explosives, the officers arrested Mrs. Mapp for what they did find: pornographic books. Although the police had invaded her home without a search warrant, she was convicted. The case eventually reached the Supreme Court, where the lower courts' rulings were reversed. *Mapp v. Ohio* became a celebrated case. The Court went beyond a reaffirmation of its own 1914 ruling that evidence seized illegally, in violation of the Fourth Amendment's prohibition on unreasonable searches and seizures, is inadmissible in federal courts. It applied that rule to state courts as well, through the "due process of law" provision of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court held that this "exclusionary rule" was the "only effectively available way . . . to compel respect for the constitutional guarantee."

Today Congress, the Administration, and the courts all seem to have qualified their respect for the constitutional guarantee in their eagerness to increase the authority and legal discretion of the police. President Reagan last week voiced his support for reform of the exclusionary rule in a speech before the International Association of Chiefs of Police in New Orleans. Cheered on by his audience, Mr. Reagan said that the rule wrongly applies the same standards to the overly conscientious police officer and the criminal, "no matter how heinous the crime. The plain consequence of treating the wrongs equally is a grievous miscarriage of justice. The criminal goes free. The officer receives no effective reprimand, and the only ones who really suffer are the people of the community."

In the Senate, Dennis DeConcini of Arizona has introduced a vaguely worded bill that would allow the courts to accept illegally obtained evidence as long as it could be demonstrated that the officers involved did not "intentially or substantially" violate the law. Orrin Hatch of Utah and Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, have sponsored another bill that would eliminate the exclusion-

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ary rule altogether. Abolitionists of the rule favor civil suits and stern disciplinary measures within the police force as defenses against illegal searches, but supporters of the rule argue that lawsuits are time-consuming and costly, and that the police can't be trusted to effectively discipline themselves.

So far the most vocal defenders of the exclusionary rule are the American Bar Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, and a few criminal lawyers. A handful of congressional supporters—including House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter Rodino of New Jersey, who publicly attacked the President's New Orleans speech, and Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts—have spoken out in its behalf. But the two Senate bills are receiving enthusiastic support from such high officials as newly appointed Supreme Court Justice Sandra O'Connor, who favors modification of the exclusionary rule, and from Chief Justice Warren Burger and President Reagan's top assistant, Edwin Meese, who favor outright abolition.

More than one legal expert has termed the attack on the exclusionary rule a "symbolic" action. The implications of both bills, however, are more than symbolic. Critics of the exclusionary rule dismiss it as a bothersome technicality that keeps incriminating evidence out of the courtroom. But removal of that technicality would mean that individual police officers would be required to define the limits of constitutional law. Since *Mapp*, an average of three out of four searches by state police challenged in the Supreme Court were found to be illegal. Even so, there is little empirical evidence to indicate that many criminals have been set free because of the *Mapp* ruling. In an ABA report to the President's Task Force on Violent Crime, Georgetown University Law Professor William W. Greenhalgh cites a General Accounting Office survey of 2,804 cases in July and August of 1978. In only 1.3 percent of those cases was evidence thrown out of court because of Fourth Amendment violations. Such a small percentage in no way justifies curbing constitutional rights.

In any event, congressional efforts to abolish the exclusionary rule are by definition unconstitutional themselves. It's ironic that the exclusionary rule's first major challenge outside the courts comes during an Administration so zealously devoted to the letter of the law. For President Reagan, who pooh-poohs the idea that poverty can contribute to crime, an attack on the exclusionary rule is a convenient way to suggest that if softheaded judges would just quit coddling criminals, the problem of crime would go away. It's good politics, but it's bad sociology and worse constitutional law. As Justice Thomas C. Clark cautioned when he handed down the *Mapp* decision: "Nothing can destroy a government more quickly than its failure to observe its own laws." Mr. Reagan is second to none in his disdain for government, but it's hard to believe this is what he has in mind.

The Koch Consensus

If all you'd known about New York City's primary elections late last month was drawn from the tendentious commentary of the media, you might not have gathered that Edward I. Koch had won, by margins of roughly two to one, the mayoral designations both of his own Democratic party and of the Republicans. Such a result was unprecedented, certainly, for the Big Apple. Here is probably the most difficult of the nation's large cities being governed by a consensus that cuts across many class and most ethnic lines. What Mayor Koch did not win was the support of the black and Hispanic communities and some tiny enclaves of the counterculture. His main Democratic opponent, Brooklyn state assemblyman Frank J. Barbaro, had the endorsement of the leaders of the municipal unions, whose enmity the mayor had earned as a necessary consequence of pruning the city's budget; but the municipal workers themselves seem, by and large, to have voted for Mr. Koch anyway. Mr. Barbaro's foot soldiers were drawn mostly from the cadres of a few old left unions. Mr. Koch also had an upscale, Upper East Side townhouse opposition (in which Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, Arthur Schlesinger, and Ted Kheel were the preeminent luminaries), but by the time most New Yorkers had turned their attention to the passions of electoral politics, these folk were otherwise engaged in the Hamptons. They are now back from the beach (Indian summer is pleasant in New York) and seeking a glimmer of victory in defeat. The evidence: the lopsided number of votes against Mr. Koch in minority neighborhoods.

If these figures do not make happy news for the incumbent mayor, they are nothing less than a tragedy for New York's blacks. They have never been more politically isolated from constituencies and social forces with which, at least on the basis of economic interests, most of them would otherwise be joined. If municipal officials elsewhere try to read an object lesson out of Mr. Koch's experience with the minorities of New York, it will be that substance counts for nothing, and symbols for everything. Put another way, this means that New York City's disadvantaged blacks can be made to seem reconciled to their condition, at least on polling days, if their leaders—however parasitic, however corrupt, and however covetous of polemical victories—are indulged in the manner that for a decade was routine. Mr. Koch's troubles with the black community, which had supported him in his successful underdog bid for mayor in 1977, did not begin because he suddenly became indifferent to its plight or his pledges. On the contrary, he moved decisively to free the huge capital then still available in the poverty program from the rapacious hands of those he called, perhaps too honestly, poverty

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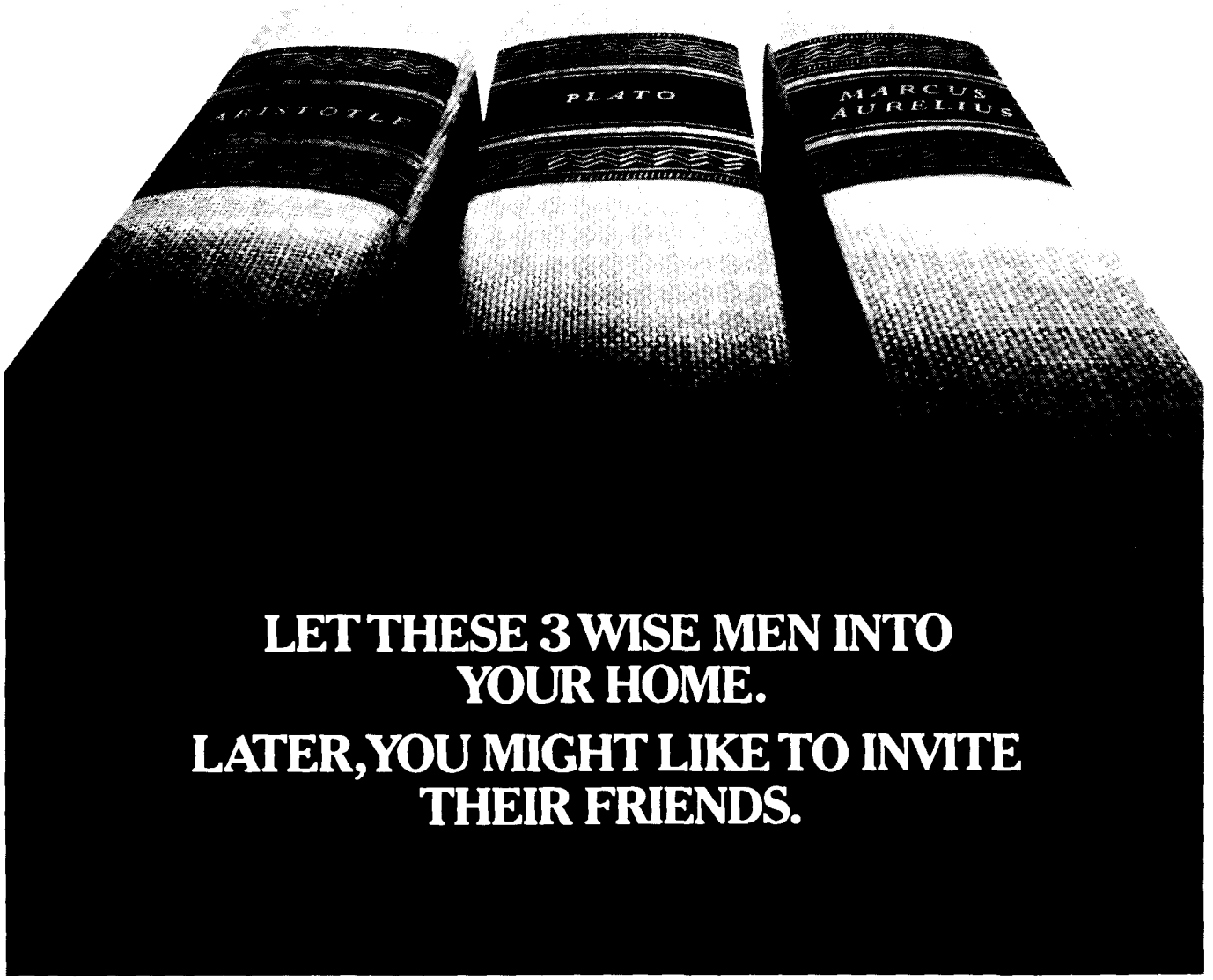

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pimps, so that it could be used productively for the really needy.

These folks are not fantasies of the churlish neoconservative imagination. Once Mr. Koch tried to cut them off from their publicly funded sources of patronage and power, they began a relentless propaganda war which inevitably cost him the support of many black and, to a lesser extent, Puerto Rican voters. Because he refused to validate the dubious moral and psychological calculus of quotas, he was painted as an enemy of minority employment. It happens to be a fact that his administration actually hired twice as many blacks and Hispanics as were employed in the Lindsay and Beame days. But that was somehow buried in the avalanche of allegations that Mr. Koch was a racist. Nothing gave more currency to this vile accusation than Mr. Koch's insistence on closing Sydenham Hospital, a costly, intrinsically inefficient, and underutilized Harlem facility. This issue, more than any other, engaged the diminishing cohort of radical and liberal whites who are disposed to view as a racist anyone not quickly brought into line by "fire-next-time" rhetoric.

WITH a gloss or two at other issues, racism is where the anti-Koch effort started and where it petered out. The burden of Mr. Barbaro's campaign was aimed at blacks. Barbaro ads on black radio were made by state assemblyman Albert Vann, who is just this side of a certified anti-Semite. He tried to paint Mr. Koch not only as a disenfranchiser of blacks today, but also as an early opponent of the Voting Rights Act (which he, incomprehensibly or maybe just cynically, dated to the death of Martin Luther King Jr.—perhaps to make Mr. Koch appear also an adversary of Dr. King's). In Congress, of course, Mr. Koch was among the civil rights vanguard. For years even people with records as stalwart as Mr. Koch's have been easily intimidated by the hustlers' charge of racism, and have finally backed off from critical issues and problems (like the frightening disintegration of the black family, increasingly costly to blacks, and to whites as well) which some black leaders prefer to consider taboo, particularly for whites.

The Koch victory hastens the end of these little tyrannies of dishonest silence. Mr. Koch now faces a handful of opponents on splinter tickets, Mr. Barbaro himself on one. Mr. Koch's Republican opponent, John A. Esposito, endorsed by the *New York Times* in the Republican primary because it thought the mayor's quest for both nominations vaguely undemocratic, now runs from a congenial ideological base on the Conservative party line; there is also the predictable Right-to-Life candidate. And there is a Liberal candidate to remind people that the Liberal party once existed in New York. With the opposition scattered on the margins, Mr. Koch can concentrate on the nonheroic liberalism of practical justice, a difficult task in the best of times, and especially arduous in ours.

Keeping Benn out of No. 10.

LABOUR STEPS BACK

Brighton, England

IT WAS NOT the best of weeks for Tony Benn. First his new campaign book came out and was immediately likened to the writings of Adolf Hitler, Oswald Mosley, and Josef Stalin. Then he lost the deputy leadership battle and lost it, moreover, because a section of the left deserted him and gave Denis Healey the whisker-thin margin he needed. Having been defeated in this contest, Benn is extremely unlikely to get a second chance. If he wants to run again, he will have to challenge openly the leadership of the whole party—an incomparably more risky move.

His book, which is graced with the emollient title of *Arguments for Democracy* (Jonathan Cape), supplies a clue or two to his defeat. It proposes nothing less than "a national liberation struggle" whereby the British people withdraw from the European Common Market, repudiate the policies of the International Monetary Fund, expel American bases and missiles, and generally, as the saying goes, gain control of their own destiny. All week I saw people come away ashen-faced from this volume and the awesome simplicity with which it is written. To listen to Benn is to listen to one of the old Puritan radicals he so admires, and to see a vision of a world made whole by acts of justice and sacrifice. Of course this is rather different from the usual mixture. Benn has gambled that what the party activists currently want is *simplicity*. They are fed up with hearing that things are complicated, that now would not be the right time to implement their program, that they must be patient and cautious. In the words of the old slogan, they want the world and they want it now. And they very nearly got it. If a handful of old-style Foot Socialists had not swallowed their pride and thrown the election to Healey, Benn would have triumphed and Michael Foot might have had to resign the leadership. As it is, the old standpatters of the trade union machine are even now recovering their nerve and preparing a further purge. In the course of the week they will loosen the hold of the left on the party's key committees, and win back some of the ground they have been conceding over the last ten years.

This is very bad news indeed for the new Social Democratic party. Its leaders had staked everything on Benn winning. They even took large advertisements in the national press for the day after the vote. The ads read simply "*Now* Will You Join the SDP?" They looked rather forlorn in the event. If Shirley Williams and David Owen had waited another six months before leaving the Labour party they might have gotten almost everything they wanted. As it is, they face a

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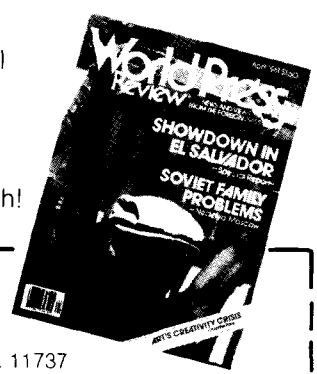

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long round of haggling with the Liberal party about which partner in the marriage is entitled to which slices of political turf.

This still leaves the British left more fractured than at any time in its history. Benn's supporters have toughened into a distinct movement during the year-long campaign which has just culminated so badly. They are out of temper with Michael Foot and the old centrists, who privately regard them as little better than Red fascists preaching National Socialism. They are not even on speaking terms with the Social Democrats and the Liberals. Above all, they are at loggerheads with the trade unions, who saw the serpent of ultra-democracy creeping toward their own fiefdoms and acted to stop it with all the bluntness of which they are capable. Benn could still take command if he made one or two amendments to his program and movement. He will have to learn to be more careful about the company he keeps: a volunteer campaign rewards hard workers above all, and his entourage contains too many hard workers who are otherwise distinctly mediocre and inclined to be shaky on points like political pluralism. He will have to modify his attitude to the press, which, although it has treated him with the basest unfairness, is now seen by his supporters as something to be nationalized at the first opportunity. He will have to tone down his rhetoric about Europe—his appeal for Britain's "national liberation" can often sound indistinguishable from the conservative and racialist demagoguery of people like Enoch Powell. He will have to realize that trade unions in Britain are often the most conservative force. At the moment, like many people of aristocratic provenance, he tends to treat organizations of working people with undue reverence.

RECENTLY President François Mitterrand paid a visit to Britain. He and his foreign minister made it perfectly clear that they regard British Labour as a utopian rabble, doomed to irrelevance and apparently bent on isolationism and protectionism. The French left has learned a very special lesson in the last generation, one which Andreas Papandreou is also learning in Greece at the moment. You can either set out to reform your own economy and institutions in favor of the working class or you can promise to withdraw your country from financial and military alliances which you dislike. If you try to do both, your currency will collapse and your debts will be called in. Mitterrand has chosen to be the toughest of the tough as far as the Western alliance is concerned, while pushing ahead quite fast on the domestic front. Papandreou has decided that foreign policy takes precedence, and most observers agree that his domestic policy doesn't have the slightest chance of even beginning to pay for itself. Benn talks as if all things were possible and as if past failures were simply the result of bad faith. In the desperate conditions created by the Thatcher government, it is easy to get away with such exaggerations. But in fact the Conservatives are in fairly good electoral shape, with the possibility of an oil-fueled boom before the next election. And the Social Democrats have at least succeeded in breaking Labour's monopoly of reformist votes. In these conditions, even with Benn held at bay, it must be wondered whether Labour will ever again form a majority government.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Christopher Hitchens is on the staff of the *New Statesman*.

Watt climbs on the states' backs.

COASTAL MISMANAGEMENT

LOOKING AT the fawning reception that Secretary of the Interior James Watt received at last month's Western Governor's Conference in Wyoming, one would have supposed that his "good neighbor" policy has satisfied the most ornery states' rights buffs. This may be true in sagebrush country, but not in coastal states where Watt recently proved himself anything but a good neighbor. On July 8, at Interior's prodding, the Reagan Administration revised regulations for federal-state coastal zone management. The new rules virtually eliminate state participation in decisions concerning their coasts. They give Watt total discretion on where and when to permit drilling for offshore oil, making a mockery of Reagan's "new federalism."

In fact, the regulations were changed precisely because they allowed the states to infringe on what Watt felt was his turf. One of Watt's first actions as secretary of the interior was to open bidding for oil leases off California's coast. In February, for-sale signs were posted at areas affecting marine sanctuaries, wildlife refuges, and beachfronts—sites vital to the state's fishing and recreational industries. But shortly after Watt announced the sale of these coastal lands, California sued the Department of the Interior and, in August, won the suit on the grounds that Watt had violated the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The act states that the government must consult the states on any decision "directly affecting" their coasts.

Rather than abide by the court's decision and negotiate with California, as the act requires, Watt simply had the act rewritten. Under the new regulations, the government will no longer consider preparations for an offshore oil lease to be activities directly affecting

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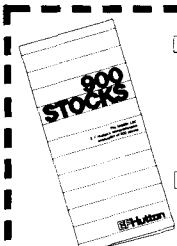

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the coastal zone. Because preleasing activities include determining the scope and location of the rigs and what environmental precautions, if any, will be taken, this is a major revision. The CZMA was designed to give the states a voice in the preleasing process, since once a lease is issued, an oil company has virtually free rein in how it goes about its business. California has challenged the legality of the new rules, which effectively deprive the states of any part in the management of their coasts.

WHATEVER the final outcome of the administration's new policy, Watt's action was a cynical abuse of the rule-making process. The CZMA falls under the purview of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Prior to the court's ruling, Watt wrote a letter on March 17 to Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige requesting that he change the regulations in the act. Arguing that the CZMA was an "excellent example of unnecessary and burdensome regulations," Watt requested the changes be made before the court reached a verdict on the lease sale. After some fierce lobbying by Interior, apparently supported by the President, Commerce reversed its long-standing policy and revised the regulations to meet Interior's requests. According to one NOAA official, the regulations were drafted by Interior. "Interior rolled [NOAA]. We knew Watt was wrong from a legal and legislative point of view." Although the new rules came too late to sway the court's ruling on the California lease sale, they ensure that Watt will not face such a trial again.

Watt not only usurped Commerce's power to interpret the CZMA, he also violated an executive order Reagan had issued in February. The Office of Management and Budget is now required to analyze and report on all new regulations before they become law. But an impact analysis can take up to six months to complete, and Watt needed speedy action in order to stand a chance of undermining California's case against Interior's lease sale. So despite Commerce's requests, the mandatory cost-benefit analysis was not performed.

If such an analysis had been done, it is unlikely that the new regulations would have been promulgated. The CZMA has rarely, if ever, blocked proposed energy development. When the act was up for reauthorization in 1980, Congress held extensive hearings on oil company claims that the act delayed oil leasing. Both the Senate and the House found no evidence to support this contention, and discovered that in fact the act was working well thoughout the country, fostering healthy federal-state cooperation. As for California's coastal management program, the General Accounting Office noted as recently as February that the state's review process was so efficient and well balanced that other states should use it as a model.

If anything, the Administration's new regulations are more likely to impede energy development than to encourage it. If states are denied a voice in what takes place in their coastal zones, their only recourse in cases of federal-state disagreement will be to sue the government. But litigation can tie up an oil lease indefinitely. It was court action, not state-federal wrangling, that delayed oil leasing off George's Bank, Massachusetts, for several years. And as Representative Gerry Studds, Democrat of Massachusetts, wisely foresees, "It is court action and yet more court action which will become inevitable if the consistency provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act are not allowed to function as intended."

All of this leads to the greatest irony of all: Watt's new rules fly in the face of his own so-called "good neighbor" policy. When Watt was in the private sector, he relentlessly berated then-Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus for running roughshod over the states. Once in office, Watt became the torchbearer of states' rights. Convinced that state government was inherently more efficient than federal government, Watt seemed to personify the Sagebrush Rebellion (see "Jim Watt's Wyoming" by Clifton Williamson Jr. and "How the West Has Won" by Cliff Sloan, TNR, September 30). Yet the essence of the CZMA is to transfer responsibility from federal bureaucracies to the states. The philosophical premise of the act is not to hamper energy development, but to ensure that a state's concerns will not be blithely overridden by Congress. In practical terms, the act was designed to save money. By subjecting planned coastal activities to state approval, Congress hoped that the shortfalls could be spotted ahead of time, not after private or public funds had already been appropriated.

THE FATE of the Administration's new guidelines will be determined by congressional action or court ruling--or both. An unusual clause inserted in 1980 in the CZMA by Representative Edwin Forsythe, Republican of New Jersey, allows Congress 60 days to block the new rules. Senator Ernest Hollings, Democrat of South Carolina, and Representative Studds have submitted a resolution to do just that. But the constitutionality of a legislative veto has yet to be determined. It is not clear how President Reagan will respond to this congressional assertion of power. If Congress does veto the new rules, Reagan might turn around and challenge its constitutionality, claiming that such action oversteps presidential prerogative. And many at NOAA's general council believe he would stand a good chance of winning.

The other alternative is to work through the courts. California has already filed suit against the Department of Commerce, challenging NOAA's new regulations. The same judge that ruled in California's favor in August is now ruling on the case. But if California wins, as expected, Watt will almost certainly appeal. And appeal and appeal. According to one NOAA offi-

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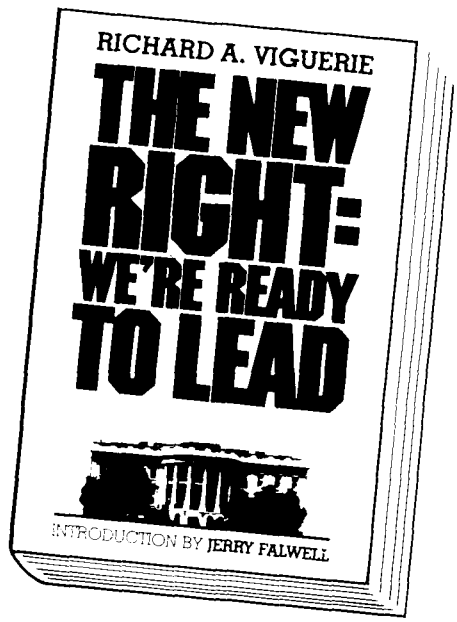

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cial, "Everyone here expects this thing to go all the way to the Supreme Court." Unless the states can secure an injunction on the new rules, Watt will have carte blanche to lease whatever properties he wants.

If the Administration's policy on coastal zone management succeeds, it will effectively reverse what in 1980 Congress considered exemplary federal-state cooperation. The new regulations violate NOAA's prior position, court opinions, congressional intent, and the Administration's own guidelines for regulatory reform. Logic alone dictates that those who are most knowledgeable about and interested in the issue—the coastal states—should be included in discussions concerning their coasts. If they are not included, as NOAA's new rules dictate, the Administration will be flaunting what Reagan claims to abhor: federal arrogance.

MICHAEL A. LERNER

Finding moral meaning in suicide.

BELFAST'S CHILDREN

Belfast

LAST SUMMER the lives of many of Belfast's children were touched significantly by the hunger strike at Maze Prison. Such ordinary lives are not usually the stuff of news, but occasionally the city's children are mentioned in an article about Northern Ireland, or appear on a television program meant to document the strife, or get pictured in newspapers: a boy throwing a rock or a gasoline-filled bottle, a girl facing down (with features twisted in anger) one of her majesty's clean-cut Tommies—himself tired, annoyed, and just perceptibly humiliated. That last emotion was conveyed to one of my sons by a British officer, to whom it must have seemed right to address the complaint to a member of the generation in question: "I never thought when I joined up I'd be watching over a band of little nasty ones." The soldier went on to describe his own three younger brothers as "all lads like you," meaning, he told my son, "proper children." Later the same soldier asked me earnestly, "What will become of them?"

I heard Belfast's eight- and ten-year-old Catholic children asking mothers and fathers if they might begin a sympathetic fast. One candy store owner (in England and Ireland, places like his are very special institutions where families gather to talk and exchange news as well as to eat) told me of that extraordinary interest on the part of many boys and girls: "The poor little ones come here more often than usual. They always love sweets, of course; but now a lot of them are hungry, rather than here to have extra dessert. They've tried to show their mums, at mealtime, how loyal they are to the men in prison. I've had a few mums come in and tell me to feed them up extra, even if their children lack the money, and they'll pay later. I asked one boy—he's ten or 11—what good it will do, for him to eat less. He gave me a cross look. Then he eyed me as if I might be the enemy! I've never seen the people here so hurt. The reporters measure by crowds and noise and violence. The police do too. They're all wrong. It's the quiet that I find strange. There is a hush over the families, a serious look I'll even see in a lot of our wee ones—as though we're all feeling a terrible sadness inside our stomachs, while the men die in that prison: one, then the next, and then the next, skin and bones. I've never seen anything like it here, and I'm over two-thirds way to my first century of life!"

Among the younger children in the Ardoyne, the Catholic neighborhood of Belfast I know best, questions about the hunger strikes abound. Boys want to know the biological and medical facts: what happens, when, and to what effect, as willful abstinence yields to malnutrition, then the awful wasting away, the deterioration of first one bodily function, then another. Boys also mention, again and again, how much determination is required to complete a fast to the end. During these recent months ten-year-old Jimmy Foley has been more serious than his parents or relatives have ever seen him: "If you're in a battle, you hold your gun tight, and keep firing. You have to be brave. But if you are lying on your bed, and you are hungry, and they bring you food, and you say no to them, then you must be tougher, even, than the soldiers in a bloody, bloody war. I'd want to steal me a bite; I'm afraid that would happen. Then I'd be ashamed. I might cry. In the movies you see soldiers cry. But I'll bet not one of our men has cried, even if his stomach hurts, and he knows he's going to starve unless he takes their food."

THE GIRLS seem more horrified—almost as if the laws of nature, if not God Himself, are being challenged. They are asking the old existentialist questions, which children have always asked during moments of danger or confusion. Jimmy's cousin Maureen was born exactly two weeks before he was. She doesn't quite keen over the ten dead, whom she often refers to as "lost to us." But she speaks with a decided earnestness, and she keeps brushing her hair away from her forehead as she makes her statements and asks her questions. Her mother says: "The girl is truly upset. She's taken to pushing her hair away from her eyes, but I'm afraid she still can't make much sense of all this suffering."

In fact, Maureen's eyes are by no means clouded. She looks intently at the telly as it brings news of the latest death by starvation. She looks at the freckles on her arms. Suddenly she says: "I remember my old aunt

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[great aunt] telling me I have the freckles of her father, and he was the most kind, the most very kind man in all Belfast. If he saw someone in trouble, he'd go and help; and he died crossing the street to reach a woman. She'd fallen down. But a car struck him, and he never made it alive to hospital. My aunt said the last thing she looked at, before they closed the coffin, was his freckles.

"If I was in the prison taking no food, I'd keep looking at my freckles, and I'd think of my aunt and her father! My mother wonders, 'Where do those men get their strength? My father says, 'They've got purpose in them—more purpose than the Brits thought.' My mother says, 'More purpose than *we* thought!' I ask all the grownup people we know where you get that purpose from. They shake their heads. Even the priest shakes his head. He says we must pray hard for the men. My best friend and I, we both asked him if God will take them all into Heaven. Father said yes, he was sure God would take all our men right to His heart. When I eat now, I think of our men starving themselves, and then I ask God to take them to His heart. We have a picture of His heart here, in our front room [titled "The Bleeding Heart of Jesus"], and I look at it more than I used to. When will God decide to stop all the troubles, and make *everyone* good, not just some people? That's my question!"

SOME OF her friends are wondering aloud, as she has upon occasion, whether they might try a "bit of starvation" themselves. They do not mean to sound self-centered or vain or frivolously personal; certainly, they don't mean to mock the dying prisoners. They are doing what we all do, connecting the personal and the everyday with life's "bigger" issues, the so-called social and political matters: "It's good to lose weight, but it's hard," one of those friends observed. Then she continued: "My mother always is slimming, but she doesn't lose much. When she does, she is happy; but she's back up again a few weeks later! Now she talks with her friends, and they all say we could do with a little of the discipline our men in prison have! I've tried skipping a meal. I wouldn't mind slimming down myself. But I get so hungry, I eat two meals in one when I go to the table and start eating again. I pray for the will, but so far I don't have it.

"I think of the prisoners all the time. One day I'll hope to have their purpose. Some *girls*, some *women* should show they can help. I asked my mother what would happen if all of us stopped eating, just like our men in the Maze. She said, 'Wouldn't *that* shake the whole world!' My father says he's not sure *what* would make the Brits budge. But if everyone took no food, and got weak, I think we'd show we're the equal of all the guns the Brits have."

Such speculations are not confined to the Catholic population. In the Shankill, a working-class Protestant neighborhood, the anger and contempt directed at the IRA in general (and at the dying, and dead, prisoners) is unsurprising. But in many homes one can feel other emotions: apprehension, surprise, consternation, the creeps, the jitters. And the questions from children and parents alike indicate that, ironically, a fiercely fought religious and sectarian struggle has inspired a similar response in many, on both sides: a unifying, if episodic, shudder. In the Ardoyne, in the Shankill, the question is the same: "How can people do that?"

EVERY DAY one hears Protestant parents asking that question—often with disdain, but with genuine curiosity as well. Protestant children follow their parents in paying close attention to the news from Maze Prison, in going through the motions of denunciation, but in showing alarm, skepticism, incredulity. Young Peter Allen is tall for a 12-year-old (a boastful 5'3") and an avid follower of the BBC reports of Ulster's summer crisis. He is ready to fight, when grown up, for a continuing allegience to the crown. He insists the matter is one of "life and death." But variations on that last phrase now get used by him in a quite specific way: "Those men choose to die. They'd rather die than live, and that's proof they're not very smart people. They're being used. They're like sheep, being led by dogs. I can't imagine going with no breakfast, and then no lunch, and no supper, either! If I miss one meal, I'm in a bad state. I want my food! It makes you wonder—ten of them!

"At first we thought they were putting on an act; but they're serious. It's death for them! Well, we're well rid of them. But new men step in. We'll have more and more trouble if we don't stop them. How, though? My father says they're not behaving like human beings."

On both sides an initial disbelief has given way to a thinly disguised fascination: "How long will it last?" Another question: "How many men will hold fast?" *Hold fast*: an expression which lends itself to both a literal and symbolic approximation of what Ulster's people continue to ask, because it is a certain *will* that strikes admiration or fear in men, women, and children—a voluntary assertion of self-control that seems to defy comprehension and makes ten or so men appear above (or below) their fellow creatures. No wonder so many Catholic children look at those familiar (and heretofore virtually ignored) pictures of the Last Supper in their homes with special regard, and no wonder so many Protestant children respond to the Reverend Ian Paisley's talk of the devil, of Satan, with a special enthusiasm; it is a common inclination to seek biblical imagery, a common feeling that normal human limits have been transcended. A Catholic teacher, no friend of the IRA, found himself, perplexed and amazed, pointing out that "even Gandhi never went the whole route, and now we're to have a dozen, maybe two dozen, doing so."

No one knows how long this latest Irish tragedy will last. My guess is that if the suicides continue, the IRA

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will have found its most effective maneuver yet. There is a painfully haunting quality to this prison drama that has had a strong effect on the region's political life, and, very important, on its social and psychological climate. One keeps expecting the hunger strike to falter and end. The families of four men have had second thoughts, but others seem implacably set to die, or to watch their sons, their husbands, their brothers die. No matter what the past legal (or criminal) record of the suicides, no matter what the methods or designs of the IRA as an organization, a dramatically unsettling, even eerie kind of selflessness is at work. These men are proving their point: they are indeed different from others confined to Maze Prison —willing and able to demonstrate a perseverence that tests and stimulates everyone's thinking.

ROBERT COLES

What did the Allies know and when did they know it?

THE UNTOLD STORY OF WORLD WAR II

BY WALTER LAQUEUR

THE PUBLICATION of a book is seldom a political event. It is rarer still that the appearance of one book requires the rewriting of several thousands of others. Yet such is the case with the second volume of the *Official History of British Intelligence in the Second World War*, published last month in London by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. It covers the crucial period from Hitler's invasion of Russia to the summer of 1943, a time when the outcome of World War II still hung in the balance.

Ever since the news of the "Ultra Secret" first became known in 1973, students of contemporary history have suspected that a wholesale revision of assumptions and conclusions about World War II would have to be undertaken. For if it was indeed true that Britain and America had intercepted and deciphered much of the enemy's wireless telegraphy throughout most of the war, there would be no escaping a reexamination of almost all the important decisions made by Western statesmen and generals. The matter of who knew what and when obviously would be of paramount importance.

But even after the disclosure of the Ultra Secret, there remained the vital question of how far the historical revision would have to go. According to one school of thought, there was a danger of exaggerating the importance of Ultra, and also of "Magic," the code word given to American intelligence derived from decoding Japanese signals. Wars are decided by superior military power, this school holds, not by intelligence. David Kahn, author of *The Codebreakers* (New American Library), and *Hitler's Spies* (Macmillan), was right when he wrote (albeit before the whole extent of Ultra became known) that "even if we had the worst intelligence and they had the best, we would still have defeated them." Even the most important information has no operational value at all unless it reaches the right people at the right time: Pearl Harbor was an obvious example of some of the things that can go wrong. Nor was it the case that the Allies knew everything about German intentions, and the Germans nothing about those of the Allies. The *Official History* shows quite clearly that although the code of the German air force was broken for most of the war—as was, incidentally, that of the *Abwehr*, the German foreign intelligence service—those of the navy and the army were available only intermittently, and frequently with delay. The Gestapo code, for reasons not altogether clear, was never broken. The Allies fequently had unrivaled strategic intelligence, but the Germans were much better, up to 1943, in operational intelligence in the field. Thus the British, for instance, would intercept Hitler's instructions to General Rommel to attack or to retreat during the North African campaign. But they had no way of knowing whether Rommel would obey or would pretend (as he occasionally did) that the orders had reached him too late. There still were unpleasant surprises for the British and later for the American forces in North Africa. It is no doubt true, as the authors say, that the Allied forces in North Africa were supplied with more information about more aspects of enemy operations than any forces had ever enjoyed in any war. But they still did not know everything, and once there was room for doubt, hesitation followed. Action was delayed—or sometimes precipitate action taken—according to the

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old saying, familiar to all students of SALT verification: "We don't know what we don't know." This was all too often the case even in ideal conditions of almost full information.

According to another school of thought—whose arguments have been most succinctly put by Ronald Lewin, author of *Ultra Goes to War* (McGraw-Hill) and other distinguished works of military history—each war has its salient characteristics. If the most striking feature of World War I was increasingly sophisticated use of unprecedented masses of artillery, the most important characteristic of World War II was the conclusive effect on military operations of "Sigint," signal intelligence. To give just one example, the battle of Midway was a turning point in the history of the war in the Pacific. It was won because in April 1942 cryptoanalysts at Pearl Harbor penetrated the Japanese naval code and thus made it possible for Admiral Nimitz to place his carriers in the right position and win a decisive battle.

The *Official History* seems to bear out Lewin's argument. Signal intelligence *was* of decisive importance, for the first and perhaps the last time in the history of strategy. Given the technical improvements in coding that have been made since then, a repeat performance seems unlikely. True, Ultra did not win the war singlehandedly; and if it had been all-powerful there would have been no reason for the war to have lasted six years.

BUT IF it was not a war-winner, it certainly shortened the war. According to a recent interview with F. H. Hinsley, editor-in-chief of the series, if it had not been for Ultra, the Germans would have seized Egypt, the invasion of France would have had to be postponed, and the conflict would have gone on until 1948 (unless nuclear weapons had been used, a possibility Professor Hinsley seems not to consider).

The present volume of the *Official History* (there will be at least two more) covers the campaigns in North Africa up to the very end. It covers the battle for the Atlantic, in which the Allies prevailed only after the British admiralty changed its ciphers. This reversed a period of heavy losses, particularly among the convoys, the result, evidently, of the Germans having broken the British naval code. Also covered are the war in the air, the German war economy, and the campaign in Eastern Europe.

From reading the German wireless traffic, the Allied command was able to make fairly realistic strategic assessments of the state of the war on all fronts. In August 1941 the Japanese ambassador in Berlin reported a conversation in which Hitler told him that in case of war between Japan and the United States, Germany would at once open hostilities with the US. On seeing the decryption of this telegram, Churchill asked for confirmation that Roosevelt had seen it. "C" (the head of British intelligence) answered in the affirmative. It has long been known that Churchill was an avid reader of intelligence signals, and it is now easier to understand why. President Roosevelt was less curious in this respect.

THIS INEVITABLY leads to the question of whether and to what extent the Allies exchanged intelligence. It now appears that there was very close cooperation between Washington and London well before Pearl Harbor. But there was also tension and conflict. After the invasion of North Africa, Britain's Secret Intelligence Service suggested that the American Office of Strategic Services and SIS should use joint codes and a single communication system. This was turned down by OSS, which feared that such an arrangement would enable the British to obtain full knowledge of US activities, while keeping their own secrets. SIS, for its part, was skeptical of American security standards and insisted on forbidding the exchange of intelligence between the two organizations in the field.

Experience with the Russians was almost uniformly negative. The British at first were eager to exchange information, and even volunteered important news on German attacks on several critical occasions. The Russians refused to cooperate even when their fortunes were at their lowest ebb, as in the fall of 1941 and again in 1942. They were even unwilling to supply technical intelligence about captured German equipment; there was apparently only one major exception—in 1942, when they provided some useful information about a new German magnetic mine.

How could the Russians refuse to cooperate while at the same time asking for maximum Allied help? One possible answer is that they did not need to barter intelligence because they had agents who had pene-

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trated the SIS and were providing them with such information in any case. (On this subject, the *Official History* keeps a discreet silence. Perhaps there will be revelations in the volumes to follow.) But Soviet agents in London could not possibly have provided intelligence quickly enough to be of operational use. A more probable explanation is that traditional Russian suspicion was too deep to permit an exchange, even if it would have been to the Russians' advantage.

The only exception was the NKVD, the forerunner of the KGB. Early in the war it willingly accepted a British offer (from the Special Operations Executive) to collaborate on subversion and propaganda in the occupied countries of Europe. The NKVD opened an office in London to get Russian agents into Western Europe. Within a few months it became clear that cooperation would be "anything but full" (in the restrained diplomatic language of the *Official History*) and the scheme was scaled down. It appears that there was a similar arrangement between the OSS and the NKVD.

IN RETROSPECT, the British were not altogether unhappy that collaboration in the intelligence field remained so limited in scope; for in the course of the war it appeared that the Germans had succeeded in breaking various Russian codes, and there would thus have been the danger that if the Ultra secrets had been freely transmitted to Russia, they would have come out.

The *Official History* also deals in passing with the theory of the British origin of the famous "Lucy" messages. This has been a major bone of contention among scholars of World War II in recent years. Lucy was a Soviet spy network operating from Switzerland, which transmitted information of remarkable accuracy and detail to the "Director" in Moscow. The identity of the source has never been revealed and the idea recently gained ground that it might have been Ultra. But this is now emphatically denied, and the mystery remains unsolved.

The *Official History* reveals quite a few other secrets. Last year, in *The Terrible Secret*, I expressed the belief that the Allies must have known early on about the mass murder of Jews in Eastern Europe, from having broken the SS code and also from railway intelligence. But this could not be proved, and it seemed as if it would remain an open question forever. Some of those prominently engaged in Ultra denied knowledge, and Martin Gilbert, a British historian, in a fine study called *Auschwitz and the Allies* published only a few months ago, stated flatly that the Allies did not know about Auschwitz until 1944. The *Official History*, in one of its many appendices, provides a conclusive answer.

The Allies did receive German police decryptions about mass shootings as early as July 1941. In September 1941 they intercepted a warning by Kurt Daluege, head of the German criminal police, that there was a danger that matters of great secrecy, such as the exact number of executions, might be deciphered by the enemy and should thenceforth be sent by courier rather than by wireless. Nevertheless, wireless continued to be used by the Germans, and, beginning in the spring of 1942, the Allies decrypted a daily report on prisoners in seven camps—including Auschwitz. In the words of the *Official History*, "the daily report consisted of a series of unheaded, unexplained columns of figures which British Intelligence worked out to mean (a) number of inmates at the start of the previous day, (b) new arrivals, (c) departures by any means and (d) the number at the end of the previous day. . . ."

The authors of the *Official History* maintain that although they had access to all existing files, they complied with British law concerning secrecy about intelligence techniques and with respect to individuals. Furthermore, some files have been destroyed, and on certain sensitive questions, not surprisingly, little light is shed. Did the Allies—as seems more than likely—also intercept and read signals originating in Russia and in neutral countries? Did they continue to do so after the war? There are limits to the comprehensiveness of information that can be expected from an official history, however detailed, fair, and honest.

The dry, even boring, impersonality of the book's presentation is in inverse ratio to its intrinsic importance, and this book is almost inhumanly impersonal. One looks in vain for any names in this big volume beyond those of Churchill, Roosevelt, and a few of the leading generals. On the other hand, committees are mentioned in virtually every paragraph: "a book written by a committee, about a committee, and for a committee" as someone has put it. This, the authors say in their preface, was quite deliberate. They were guided by Gustave Flaubert's recipe for a perfect realistic novel: *Pas de monstres et pas de héros*. But in real life, in contrast to the perfect realistic novel, there quite often are heroes and villains (or at least heroic and villainous committees).

IT IS TRUE that if the authors had dealt with individuals they would have produced an encyclopedia rather than a book. Yet it is also true that sooner or later praise and blame will have to be apportioned. Questions that were never satisfactorily answered to begin with are now murkier than ever. Why did victory in North Africa take so long? And why in the end did Eisenhower and Montgomery let the Germans escape? Why was the British admiralty so little security-conscious up to 1942? Why did the American air command continue the bomber offensive against Germany long after it was clear that its achievements were not remotely as substantial as proclaimed? These and many other questions will have to be answered. The rewriting of the history of World War II must now begin. The wider canvas will not remain empty for long.

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HIGH ON THE HOG, IV

GIFTS OF THE NATION

BY MICHAEL KINSLEY

TO CELEBRATE the Duke of Marlborough's triumph over the French in the battle of Blenheim (1704), the grateful British nation presented him with a magnificent palace designed by John Vanbrugh, set in a huge park landscaped by Capability Brown. Marlborough's descendants, the Churchill family, lived in privileged splendor at Blenheim Palace until recent years, when taxes and upkeep forced them to open the house and grounds to tourists. Conservatives might take this as a parable: in olden days the state conferred wealth; today it destroys wealth. Under capitalism, of course, the state should do neither. But no squawks of protest were heard from supply siders in July, when a group of Boston investors sold a local television station to a media conglomerate for $220 million. The station's assets were a few million dollars' worth of equipment and a license to operate from the Federal Communications Commission. This gift had been conferred by the nation in 1972 following an epic battle of the modern sort, a battle of lawyers.

Far from being exclusively in the business of destroying wealth, the modern state is creating new millionaires all the time. Any random collection of rich Americans (President Reagan's California cronies, for example) is bound to include a few who built real estate empires on the decisions of government zoning and highway planning authorities, and others who've prospered selling obscure goods or services to the military. An entire federal agency, the Small Business Administration, devotes much of its energies to anointing minority-group millionaires through subsidized loans, no-bid government contracts, and whatnot. Government-sponsored guild systems help to assure the prosperity of doctors and lawyers. But the most dramatic form of government millionaire-making is the same one favored 200 years ago: conferring a monopoly on some important aspect of commerce. In *Progress and Poverty* (1880), Henry George explained the difference between this kind of wealth and wealth acquired through the supply-side verities:

> When James I granted to his minion the exclusive privilege of making gold and silver thread, and prohibited, under severe penalties, everyone else from making such thread, the income which Buckingham enjoyed in consequence did not arise from the interest upon the capital invested in the manufacture, nor from the skill, etc., of those who really conducted the operations, but from what he got from the king . . . in reality the power to levy a tax for his own purposes upon all the users of such thread. From a similar source comes a large part of the profits which are commonly confounded with the earnings of capital. . . . Profits thus derived are not to be confounded with the legitimate returns of capital as an agent of production. They are for the most part to be attributed to a maladjustment of forces in the legislative department of government and to a blind adherence to ancient barbarisms and the superstitious reverence for the technicalities of a narrow profession in the administration of law. . . .

Today anyone may sell gold or silver thread. But the classical forms of royal licensing survive in the television business. In cities across the land, local eminence or connections to the mighty may be bartered for large blocks of stock in cable TV enterprises which are seeking the sanction of municipal potentates. Cable franchise scandals have surpassed sewer and garbage graft in the dog-bites-man ranking of local corruption stories. Traditional TV broadcasting licenses, however, are controlled by the FCC in Washington, where a greater premium is put on decorum and the appearance of fairness. Since World War II, in the service of these ideals, that commission has created procedures for assigning television channels that are without rival in all of modern litigation for their length, complexity, and pointlessness. For 28 years the FCC had been pondering the question of who should operate the ABC affiliate in Orlando, Florida, when the parties finally settled it among themselves a few months ago. One commentator was moved to write:

> This scarecrow of a suit has, in course of time, become so complicated that no man alive knows what it means. The parties to it understand it least, but it has been observed that no two . . . lawyers can talk about it for five minutes without coming to a total disagreement as to all the premises. Innumerable children have been born into the cause; innumerable young people have married into it; innumerable old people have died out of it . . . a long procession of [Commissioners] has come in and gone out . . . but [this case] still drags its dreary length before the court, perennially hopeless.

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Actually, that is Charles Dickens describing Jarndyce and Jarndyce, the case that forms the backdrop to his novel *Bleak House*. But TV licensing cases are the modern equivalents of the cases in Chancery Court that Dickens mocks, with their "numerous difficulties, contingencies, masterly fictions, and forms of procedure." In the novel, Jarndyce and Jarndyce finally dissolves when the lawyers' bills consume the entire amount at issue. That hasn't happened yet in a TV licensing case, because the profit from running a TV station is so immense. But the economics are no less absurd. A TV station can be built and equipped for two or three million dollars. The legal costs of getting the license to run that station, though, or to keep the license from a determined challenger, can run up to ten million dollars. Yet one year's operating profits can easily pay back all these costs, and a TV station with a valid license in a major market can be sold for $100 million or more.

Channel 5 in Boston was assigned to the *Herald-Traveller*, that city's leading afternoon newspaper, on a "temporary" basis in 1953. In those early days, the FCC favored giving TV licenses to newspapers. They were thought to represent responsible local ownership with a built-in interest in public affairs. The Commission spent eight years pondering whether to make the *Herald*'s license permanent, and was on the verge of doing so when, in 1961, it was discovered that the chairman of the station and the chairman of the FCC had had an unauthorized meal together, and the whole proceeding had to start all over again. In 1969, the Commission took the *Herald-Traveller*'s license away and assigned it to a competing investor group sprinkled with Harvard professors and other high-toned types. It took only three more years for two federal courts to affirm this decision, and the station changed hands in 1972.

The FCC had decided that, contrary to its earlier thinking, local newspapers should *not* own local TV stations, because this reduced the diversity of media voices in town. The only trouble with this fine piece of reasoning is that the *Herald-Traveller*, which had been living on the TV station profits, promptly went out of business when it lost the license. The same happened years later to the *Washington Star* after it was separated from a profitable TV station at FCC orders. Other newspapers have contrived to meet the FCC's "diversity" rules by swapping their local stations with newspapers in other cities, nicely defeating the FCC's concurrent alleged desire to promote local ownership.

The FCC's other reason for preferring the high-toned investors to the *Herald* was that they promised to manage the station themselves. The FCC claims to prize owner management. But no mention was made of this alleged preference (or to local ownership or media diversity or the other factors that had been chewed over for 19 years) last July, when the new owners sold out to Metromedia, Inc., the country's fourth-largest broadcasting conglomerate, based in New York. Stock bought for ten dollars a share—most of which went for legal fees—sold for $1,300 a share. One of many absurdities in the FCC ritual is that a TV license, once acquired, can be transferred virtually at will, no matter how poorly the new owner meets the standards that led the old owner to get the license in the first place.

An even more absurd licensing battle has been going on for 12 years over another channel in Boston, and is still unresolved. Channel 7 has been operated since 1947 by RKO General Corporation, a broadcasting pioneer. Unlike the *Herald-Traveller*, RKO was awarded a "permanent" license, but these must be renewed every three years. Of course it takes far more than three years to resolve the controversy if a license is challenged, but this doesn't bother the lawyers involved. In June 1980, the FCC blithely released a 358-page ruling about who should run the station for the period 1969 through 1972.

In 1969, inspired by the apparent success of the challenge to Channel 5, two different investor groups decided to try to take Channel 7 away from RKO. One, led by a local supermarket heir, became known as the "integrated" group because one of the investors was publisher of Boston's black newspaper. The other group, about equally composed of blacks and whites, became known as the "black" group because its stock was structured to give blacks control of the station, even though the whites (including the present owners of THE NEW REPUBLIC) had put up almost all of the money. Following the prescribed FCC ritual, the challengers described at great length in various legal filings their members' good works in the community, their commitment to run the station personally, and their great desire to put on any number of local public affairs shows. The supermarket heir, for example, "worked . . . developing ideas and roughing out proposals for a series of 26 programs on child care . . . ," while the black publisher "administered a weekend sensitivity training session in Dublin, New Hampshire," on minority employment opportunities. The head of the black group was a consultant "in the areas of personnel systems, ghetto industry development, training programs, organizational evaluation

CONSUMERS OF WEALTH

Rich people and lavish living play a key role in Reaganomics. Personal enrichment is held to be the vital incentive and reward for "creators of wealth" who enrich society as a whole by their hard work, creativity, and daring. Concern about inequality, say the supply-side economists, is based on specious "zero-sum" reasoning which overlooks the fact that rich people put more into the economy than they take out. This is the fourth in a series of articles considering whether, in real life, the greatest consumers of wealth are the greatest producers of wealth as well.

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and development, and intergroup conflict resolution." Another was the head of a firm called Blackside, "a Black oriented communications enterprise engaged in production of film programs and television commercials."

POSSIBLY the silliest aspect of a TV license challenge is the solemn consideration of various contenders' financial qualifications. At one point in the subsequent years of litigation, it was officially determined (subject to endless review) that the "black" group could not afford to run a TV station. This is like concluding that someone cannot afford to win the Irish Sweepstakes. The group had estimated its construction and start-up costs at $4.8 million. The group included several investors worth many times that amount. More to the point, $4.8 million is just a few months' profit for a major TV station, once it has a license. But the FCC clings to the fiction that the licenses it dispenses are worthless, and therefore of no help in raising operating funds.

The FCC requires every applicant to report "(1) the measures he has taken and the effort he has made to determine the tastes, needs and desires of his community or service area, and (2) the manner in which he proposes to meet those needs and desires." In 1980, pondering RKO's fitness to run the station from 1969 through 1972, the Commission carefully reviewed its performance in these areas from 1966 through 1969. During that period, RKO sponsored 17 luncheons with "community leaders" such as the officers of the Junior League, and participated "in the activities and functions of numerous groups and organizations," all spelled out in detail. RKO's many actions on behalf of minorities included "attendance at and contributing to the cost of a three-day conference held June 28-30, 1968, in Dublin, New Hampshire"—apparently the same conference one of its challengers had organized. Having thus ascertained the needs of the community, RKO went on to serve them with shows such as "Ideas on Trial," a Saturday afternoon series called "Impact," annual broadcast coverage of "Student Government Day," and the once-a-month feature, "This is Temple Israel." The FCC puts great stock in pious programming exercises like these, which is the only reason that every TV station in the country runs such shows. As everyone except the FCC realizes, the needs and desires of the community are actually best satisfied by the national network programming and syndicated reruns of "I Love Lucy." Stations need no special urging from the FCC to run shows that are popular with viewers, because the desire to sell advertising is incentive enough. But the FCC, in the name of serving the community, demands that TV stations run shows that no one watches as a sort of penance for making so much money on shows that people really want. What the FCC prizes most is local programming broadcast live. It is known in Commission jargon as "local live" and in the broadcasting community as "local dead."

Following another established ritual, RKO solicited testimony from 86 leading members of the Boston community about the excellence of its programming, all of which testimony is summarized in the FCC's 1980 decision. These ranged from Senator Edward Brooke (who was not senator when the review period started and, having served two full terms, was not senator again when the decision was issued) to "Ms. Molly Pitcher, public relations director of the Buddy Dog Humane Society" who testified that her appearance on Channel 7 was "wholly responsible for the success of the Buddy Dog Humane Society, the only humane organization in the area which imposes no time limit on an adoptable dog's stay in its shelter."

RKO's challengers brought on their own community leaders to dispute RKO's claims that it was beloved by all its viewers. The director of the Audio-visual Center at Providence College, for example, testified that he couldn't remember RKO ever interrupting a network show in favor of a local program. "He also testified that he was a fan of the 'Bullwinkle' cartoon show at that time and 'Temple Israel' was alternated with the 'Bullwinkle' show by WNAC-TV so that he didn't know when 'Bullwinkle' was coming on, that you never knew which program you would see on a given Sunday. He never watched the 'Temple Israel' program."

THE MOST important requirement for a TV license applicant is "character," and the only real way to pry a license away is to convince the Commission that the current operator's character is wanting. The occasional preempting of "Bullwinkle" in favor of "This is Temple Israel" being, at worst, morally ambiguous, RKO's challengers offered two other examples of its defective character. One concerned "The Della Reese Show," a TV program which RKO produced in Hollywood and syndicated. On 40 of 193 shows, RKO had failed to announce that record companies had paid part of the cost of guest appearances by their artists (or, in one instance, "the cost of dogs appearing with a performer"). Shocked? Well, how about this one. In 1967 the Justice Department began investigating General Tire, RKO's parent company, for an antitrust transgression known as "reciprocal trading," in which a diversified company pressures those who want to do business with one division to do business with another division as well. In the early 1960s, a few General Tire suppliers had been pressured to buy commercials on Channel 7. In 1970, General Tire signed a consent decree—that is, without admitting that it had done anything wrong, it promised never to do it again.

In June 1974, an FCC internal judge ruled that RKO should get to keep the station, despite a "comparative demerit" for "inadequate supervision" of "The Della

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Reese Show." The challengers knew they needed better dirt in order to persuade the full Commission to overturn this ruling. To this end, the supermarket-based group hired Terry Lenzner, a self-described "investigative lawyer." Based on his early successes against victims like RKO, Lenzner gets $175 an hour these days for helping people find legal trouble for other people. Rather than poking around RKO, Lenzner decided to concentrate on General Tire. Reasoning that General probably behaved no better than any other large multinational corporation in those pre-Watergate morality days, Lenzner looked for, and eventually found, evidence that General had bribed foreign officials in order to sell equipment to their governments, and had set up a small political slush fund here in the US. In 1975, this new information was dropped into the top of the FCC's long alimentary canal. The challengers argued that these exceptional lapses by the parent company (discovered by investigators working on the assumption that they were quite commonplace) made RKO morally unfit to run a TV station, even though no one actually involved in running the station had anything to do with them.

THE FCC digested these morsels for three years. Meanwhile the challengers grew restless and RKO grew nervous. In 1978, the three parties struck a deal: the "black" group and the "integrated" group would merge and buy the station from RKO for $54 million. This price was far less than the station was worth, but it was a sensible deal since the challengers were giving up the chance—and RKO was avoiding the risk—that the FCC would transfer the license for free. There was only one difficulty: in order to sell the station, RKO had to clear up this little licensing difficulty it had been going through. The former challengers were happy to help. They filed new documents with the Commission taking back all those awful things they had said about RKO and urging, upon reflection, that RKO's license be renewed as soon as possible.

But the course of a great regulatory proceeding is not to be reversed so easily. For two more years, the FCC pondered whether RKO had sufficient moral character to run a television station. "We wish to emphasize at the outset," began the Commission's June 1980 magnum opus, "that this decision is not 'punishment' for past wrongs. Our sole and proper concern here is with the prospective operation of WNAC-TV. . . . Broadcasters . . . must satisfy the highest standards of character . . . " and so on. The trouble with this fine declaration of purpose was that everyone knew the "prospective operation" of Channel 7 was not going to involve RKO in any event. The only question was whether the challengers would get the license for free, or for $54 million. And the only thing keeping RKO at the helm, morally fit or not, was the delay in reaching some—any—conclusion.

The Commissioners decided that RKO's moral turpitude was too great to entrust it with a TV station. "We recognize that disqualification of RKO may have a substantial economic impact on General Tire's shareholders, most of whom are undoubtedly innocent of any personal misconduct." (And indeed it did: General's stock dropped $95 million in value the day the decision was announced.) "But, in this case, the . . . need to protect the public interest must prevail over private concerns." If the Commissioners had ruled that RKO was *not* a threat to the public interest, it would have gotten its license, sold it, and been out of the business by now. Having lost, however, RKO naturally appealed to the federal circuit court. That decision is many months away, and it will be appealed to the Supreme Court no matter how it comes out. Meanwhile, RKO still runs the station, making millions, and will continue to do so, probably, for years.

LONG-RUNNING farces like the Boston television wars have developed because the government insists on giving away something terrifically valuable for free. This leads the FCC to spin out its exquisitely refined doctrines for preferring one applicant to another, and its elaborate due process procedures for assuring that such decisions are fair. The same basic fact leads combatants in the FCC wars to spare no expense, delay, or legal confusion in their campaigns to acquire or protect licenses. Most of this morass could be cleared up by the simple device of auctioning off TV licenses periodically, a fine capitalist procedure that would leave the stations in private hands while returning the monopoly profits to society as a whole.

An odd provision tacked onto last summer's budget bill permits the FCC to experiment with auctioning when it determines that competing license applicants are equally qualified—a determination that itself can take many, many years. But the same provision also extends, from three to five years, the time a licensee can rake in the profits before worrying about renewal. Congress is unlikely ever to tamper with the broadcast licenses it has already granted, since in the process of doing so it also has created a powerful new political pressure group. The most famous critic of government-granted monopolies described the problem 200 years ago. Adam Smith wrote:

> The member of parliament who supports every proposal for strengthening this monopoly, is sure to acquire not only the reputation of understanding trade, but great popularity and influence with an order of men whose numbers and wealth render them of great importance. If he opposes them, on the contrary, and still more if he has authority enough to be able to thwart them, neither the most acknowledged probity, nor the highest rank, nor the greatest public services, can protect him from the most infamous abuse and detraction, from personal insults, nor sometimes from real danger, arising from the insolent outrage of furious and disappointed monopolists.

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CORRESPONDENCE

CRUDE HUMOR

To the editors:
What a way to launch your new design! Michael Kinsley's "Jerkofsky & Company" (TNR, September 9) is without a doubt one of the most hilarious, creative, and ingenious pieces of commentary I have seen in my 32 years. My associates and I had a one-hour belly-laugh one day last week as I performed an oral interpretation of the dialogue. What a superb one-act play this would make, Mr. Kinsley!

Ralph G. Perrino
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:
I like to take a friendly poke at giants myself from time to time; but Michael Kinsley, in his otherwise clever spoof of my father's show in your September 9 issue goes a bit too far when he tabs the old man "Jerkofsky."

I'm not a fighting man but, were this an earlier century, I think a duel might be in order for insulting my family name. For the time being, I'll settle for the printing of this letter and, if he has the class, an apology from Kinsley for the unwarranted sexual allusion. Short of that, a punch in the nose would perhaps be the most appropriate response.

Jonathan I. Z. Agronsky
Washington, DC

Michael Kinsley replies:
I apologize. Please don't punch me in the nose.

WESTERN SECURITY

To the editors:
Edward Luttwak claims in "Tactical Advance" (TNR, September 16) that enhanced radiation weapons would "alleviate the now serious danger of panicked gun crews firing off their nuclear rounds when about to be overrun by Soviet armor." This could only be the case if the gun crews had taken advantage of the "superior range of the new artillery shell" and fired them off long before. Contrary to Luttwak's conclusion, this would lower the nuclear threshold. One could more easily argue for the deterrent effect of panicky gun crews.

Nuclear war and nuclear weapons pose the most immediate threat to mankind. How else could civilization end in most of the Western world before I finish this letter? Who dares call this the basis of Western security? Luttwak wrote: "The one reasonable criticism of the enhanced radiation weapon is that they would lower the nuclear threshold." This criticism is valid and it alone should be enough to dissuade the rational.

David Kovaka
Gourverneur, New York

Edward Luttwak replies:
Before dissolving in the usual soggy protestations, David Kovaka writes of geometry—the geometry of artillery fires on the battlefield. To repeat, the longer range enables one to cover the same frontage from safer firing positions further back. On lowering the nuclear threshold: security must be balanced against that. Giving up all nuclear weapons raises the famous threshold to infinity but reduces security to zero.

LESS IS MORE?

To the editors:
"We'd care more for our wilderness if we had less"? ("Washington Diarist," TNR, September 9.) I suppose the same could be said for civil liberties, racial justice, and the nation's mothers, but that might require a few seconds more thought. In the meantime, let me add my voice to the chorus now chanting for the immediate removal of "M.P." from his stewardship at TNR.

The reason why Martin Peretz was able to enjoy 60 miles of pristine vastness on his recent vacation is because we've had 60 years of reasonably enlightened Interior Department policy, policy which Jim Watt proposes to radically alter. Peretz's myopic vacationers-per-square-mile survey reminds me of a favorite Ronald Reagan story from "Call to Action": "One Saturday afternoon, during the campaign to decide whether or not there should be a Coastal Commission, I took a helicopter ride from Los Angeles to San Diego. We passed several state beaches, some crowded and some virtually empty. They had the same facilities, and in some cases the crowded beach and the empty beach were within a quarter-mile of each other. Obviously many beach-goers prefer to be crowded together." If Peretz's data is any guide, so do many hikers.

Garry Trudeau
New York, New York

BLACK-SHEEP CRITIC

To the editors:
There are only two occasions for Robert Brustein's columns: 1) when he is attacking what everyone concedes to be a hit, and 2) when he is lauding what everyone believes to be a failure. Your theater critic knows no middle ground. He checks out the other reviewers first, and once confirmed in his preciousness launches out to strike blows in the name of culture and taste.

The play doesn't seem to matter. Brustein's reactions are conditioned not so much by what he sees as by what others say. I have learned he does not form taste so much as he is formed by it.

It's sad that your theater critic has such a powerful platform, that he's widely read, and that prestigious universities bid for his services. He's the *Chorus Line* of theater critics: long-running, well attended, and predictable.

Karl Stark
Levittown, Pennsylvania

Robert Brustein replies:
Karl Stark of Levittown, eyeing me in THE NEW REPUBLIC for only two years, has exposed a secret I thought I had successfully concealed from the public during my 24 years of reviewing plays—that I read other theater critics and often don't agree with them. The damned mole has blown my cover. I live in deadly fear that next he will decide to monitor my opinions of "well-loved" plays over the last quarter of a century, and build an even stronger case against my pernicious, predictable addiction to "culture and taste."

On the other hand, the research might prove salutary for him—not just to validate my record on the hits and flops of the period, but to indicate that the critical consensus on any given cultural issue is generally wrong more often than right. This might persuade him that there is nothing unhealthy about having opinions of one's own.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A Film Fate?

The Aviator's Wife
(New Yorker Films)

Beau Père
(New Line Cinema)

When an artist has been as fine as Eric Rohmer, particularly in an art as unstable and treacherous as film, there's a temptation to take his career as symptomatic of that art's possibilities. "If this is what happens to *him*," we infer, "then this must be the best that his art can permit. His work is delineating the limits of possibility."

Obviously that paragraph wouldn't have been written if Rohmer's new film were good. The troubles implicit here are not the usual directors' woes: money or casting or extrinsic hassles. Maybe there were such difficulties for Rohmer, but they're not apparent, not even important. The problems here are intrinsic, fundamental: they would pertain if filmmaking were no more expensive or technologically complex than composing a poem.

Rohmer began as a writer. He wrote fiction before film criticism, before he started his own magazine in Paris, *La Gazette du Cinéma*, in 1950. His *Six Moral Tales*, most of them now well known as films, were written as stories, said Rohmer, before he knew he was going to be a filmmaker. They were translated and published last year (by Viking), and they are self-sufficient, good fiction. Rohmer's subsequent films of them are, like Malraux's and Handke's films, realizations in another art of material already realized as writing by the same man.

So the films of his *Six Moral Tales*, including those exquisite pictures *Claire's Knee*, *My Night at Maud's*, and *Chloe in the Afternoon*, have a kind of umbilical link with literature. Rohmer found ways to transmute literature into film: that process has been the center of his style. He has not been a stodgy, "literary" director: he has been a unique and daring *film* artist, a synesthetic alchemist. Apparently he needed this connection with literature in order to film at all because, when he had finished with his own six good stories, he moved on to adapt two world masterpieces, Kleist's *The Marquise of O. . .* and Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*. The former film is now widely recognized as a treasure in our heritage of great cinema. The latter shows Rohmer bravely urging the film form to an aesthetic accommodation that is beyond it. If the phrase "noble failure" can ever be used unpatronizingly, *Perceval* is the instance.

After a three-year absence, during which he staged a Kleist play in Paris, Rohmer has launched a new series of films which he calls *Comedies and Proverbs*. The opening film is now shown here, *The Aviator's Wife*, and my first question is whether he has cut the ties to literature-as-base that had previously sustained him. Did he write this story first as a *story*? I must doubt it: because this new film is not only the thinnest Rohmer that I know, its method is a reversion to the anti-writer style of the earliest French New Wave.

The Aviator's Wife centers on François, a Paris student and part-time postal worker, in love with Anne, an office worker, who is tiring of him. Christian, an aviator, who too has had an affair with Anne, tells her that their relation is finished. François sees Christian leaving Anne's apartment, spots him at a café later, and spends the day following Christian and a blonde woman who joins him. François assumes that the blonde is Christian's wife whose move to Paris is his reason for leaving Anne. During this surveillance François picks up a 15-year-old student, Lucie, who amuses herself by spending the afternoon with François watching the other pair. When Lucie has to leave, she gives François her address. It turns out that the blonde is Christian's sister, not his wife (for all that this matters). In the end, after a long to-and-fro scene in Anne's bedroom highly reminiscent of the long bedroom scene in Godard's *Breathless*, François and Anne are possibly reconciled. She nevertheless tells him to write Lucie, whom he has mentioned. That night, when he arrives at Lucie's apartment house to leave a note, he sees her kissing a young man goodbye. Presumably François is now going to follow that young man as he did Christian, and the picture ends with a sentimental ballad about Paris on the sound track.

The story—deliberately, I assume—has no narrative richness: it's meant to simulate the dailiness of the lives involved. The camera follows François and the others the way François follows Christian, wherever the meandering may lead, encouraging moodiness, pointless chatter, and tiny conversational games. It's much like what Godard and Varda and others were doing so many years ago, glorying in the power of the film to renounce traditional drama: film's power, merely by presence and penetration, to be *with* people and let their beings be the film. (Coincidentally, perhaps, Philippe Marlaud, who plays

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Chariots of Fire. The basically true story of two British Olympic runners, 1924, wrought into a complex portrait of a society and a drama of hope. Excellently done in every way.

The French Lieutenant's Woman. Harold Pinter's time-tapestry screenplay gives the film both substance and ultimate confusion, but the Victorian strand is exquisite and all of it is well acted.

Stevie. Modest, poignant, witty, deeply humane. Glenda Jackson as the English poet Stevie Smith, Mona Washbourne as her aunt, Trevor Howard as friend and chorus are superb.

True Confessions. A wearily hip script—about the seaminess of the LA police and the frailties of the Catholic church—but sensitively acted by Robert Duvall (detective) and Robert De Niro (his brother, a priest). Ulu Grosbard directed well.

SK

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François, and Anne-Laure Meury, the Lucie, suggest Michel Debord and Catherine-Isabelle Duport of Godard's *Masculine/Feminine*.) But, besides the fact that Rohmer's use of the method now seems imitative, the Godard of those days was using the method as one of a series of attacks on "classic" cinema, and Rohmer is not. At one point Rohmer irises out and in again to denote a time lapse—a device that's embarrassingly out of texture, a failed *jeu*, like a middle-aged man doing a few rock steps.

WHAT ROHMER intended to be simple is vapid. What he intended to be eddying and insightful is garrulous. And the people whom he chose to "fill" his screen—especially the rather whiny and unappealing Marie Rivière who plays Anne—don't. I kept remembering Jean Eustache's *The Mother and the Whore* where the three people on whom he concentrated became the theater of the film. Most certainly not so here.

I'm not positive that Rohmer wrote this screenplay directly for the screen instead of finishing it first as prose narrative, but it certainly lacks the assurance of his earlier work. Some of the dialogue may even have been improvised, again à la early New Wave. Possibly because he no longer had the literary support that he always had before, he has fallen back on French cinematic platitudes. He *has* written an explanation of what the new *Comedies and Proverbs* series will be about, telling us that they will be theater-oriented—which is not perceptible in *The Aviator's Wife*—and that the series will not be limited to six. The motto of this film is "One can't think of nothing," which is neither comic nor proverbial. But I won't quote further from his statement about the series because it too strongly underscores the film's faults: Gallic cinematic bloat at its most tedious.

To be saying these things about Rohmer! Possibly—and this was the opening worry of my review—what's happening to him is a film fate. His literary-cinema linkage was his form of film *creation*, and perhaps he has abandoned it, not because he couldn't find another literary work he wanted to adapt, but because the process of creation that such adaptation meant to him has weakened. This new nonadaptation, the unworthiest Rohmer film that I know, makes me wonder whether this new move, far from being liberation or innovation, may be a sign of exhaustion.

Perhaps it's no longer possible to have a lifelong career as a fertile film artist. The circumstances, not merely financial, that supported an Ozu or Mizoguchi or Ford or Renoir no longer pertain. Recently Bergman has announced that he will make only two more films though he is now only 63. The varyingly interesting men who began work after 1950—Fellini, Antonioni, Olmi, Jancsó, Kubrick, Peckinpah, Teshigahara, among others—seem to fall away sooner or later into desperations or silence or rhetoric. Occasionally they flicker up again, like Fellini, but they don't have "reliable" careers. The younger generation is even more quickly disappointing. The French director Bertrand Blier made his US debut with the harsh, valuably disturbing *Going Places* (TNR, July 6 & 13, 1974), then lost his teeth through chewing on sugar until he hit sweet success with *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs*; and now he comes up with *Beau Père*, a sentimental concoction about a young man living with a woman who has a 14-year-old daughter and who, after the woman is killed, has an affair with the demanding girl though he is, in a sense, her stepfather. It couldn't be more soggily daring. Within seven years Blier has gone into the French candy business.

Money is not the central issue (for once!). A continually fruitful creative life is harder in any art than it used to be, and perhaps the film world is more vampiric than other arts, perhaps it drains and demands more. A theater lighting designer I know says that every talented theater director has 12 good productions in him. I don't take that as gospel, but if it is even faintly suggestive in regard to theater troubles, it gets frighteningly magnified when we think about film. If Eric Rohmer, wonderful artist that he has been, not only can make a film like this but can also surround it with fanfares of assertion and ambition, I'm tempted to think that somewhere in himself he feels fear, emptiness, and is reacting with more bravado than art.

I'd like little better than to apologize for this review in a year or two.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Rituals of Privacy

I've previously had occasion to groan in these pages over the congenital failure of the contemporary American theater to deal with issues other than the agonies and ecstasies of personal relationships. To judge by most of the recent new comedies in New York, the most pressing issues of our time are love, marriage, and adultery, while serious plays are preoccupied with divorce, fatal illness, or physical handicaps. Our dramatic characters are seldom out of bed, whether they are at home making love or in the hospital dying. Questions of politics, society, religion, philosophy, and metaphysics are rarely raised these days in front of a theater audience. It's not hard to invent reasons for the absence of a public dimension in our drama. Growing more domestic and enclosed as the outside world becomes more intractable and bewildering, American drama may be reflecting our sense that we can no longer modify or influence our society. Perhaps an equally convincing cause is economic. In an era of rising costs, it's obviously much cheaper to limit the cast to a nuclear family or a trio of lovers, working out their problems within a single inexpensive setting.

Key Exchange
by Kevin Wade

Not Quite/New York
by Bill Irwin

The Dance and the Railroad
by David Hwang

Cost-cutting certainly seems to be the motor energy behind an entirely forgettable entertainment called *Key Exchange* by Kevin Wade (Orpheum). The title of this play suggests a kinky suburban farce, but the budget doesn't even provide for doors to slam or beds to hide under. Instead, the entire action takes place on a bicycle path in Central Park. For this purpose, we are asked to believe that three separate individuals living in three different places would meet acci-

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dentally on nine weekend occasions over a period of two summer months. These coincidental encounters take place while they are pedaling around the reaches of this vast park, enacting climactic exchanges while catching their breath between rides. Such coincidences, I should add, are the least of the author's contrivances. Even more of a strain on one's credulity is the play's assumption that its characters are of sufficient maturity to have any adult domestic problems whatsoever.

For all three act and talk like refugees from an adolescent TV sit-com—particularly the men who, in their reversed caps, cotton shorts, and lettered shirts, are identically costumed like the young biking heroes of Steve Tesich's *Breaking Away* (recently picked up as the basis for a television series). Although the characters have been provided with professions, they behave more like teenage kids living off an allowance—particularly the men (again) whose thought processes are entirely fixed on girls. Philip, who writes detective novels, thinks Lisa, a photographer, has a "great bod," but although he occasionally lives with her, he prefers to continue seeing other women (a preference he describes as "having my cake and having my cupcake too"). Lisa, on the other hand, is interested more in a committed relationship ("I can't do casual any more"), which is why she suggests exchanging keys—an offer Philip declines out of fear that she might one day find him in bed with another woman. Michael, engaged in an unsuccessful marriage, is present to provide a sympathetic ear. By the end, after Lisa has taken up with another man, Philip discovers he is jealous. Is this the beginning of something serious?—"We'll talk," says Lisa, "we'll see." Curtain.

YOU LEAVE the theater, in company with a warmly contented audience, absolutely dazed by the play's triviality and artificiality, qualities which are generously reinforced by the production. Brooke Adams, playing Lisa with a single fixed expression—curved lips set in a half smile—looks as if she is posing for a fashion photographer, and often seems in danger of running out of breath, but at least she occasionally comes through as a human being. Not so her male counterparts. Ben Masters and Mark Blum are perfectly competent actors, but they have been directed (by Barnet Kellman) to banter with each other in a mechanical overlapping style that, at best, resembles the Fonz hectoring Potsie in *Happy Days*, and, at worst, sounds like C3PO trading beeps with R2D2. Imagine *Death of a Salesman* reduced to Biff and Happy in the bedroom comparing notes on the available stuff and you'll have the measure of this comedy's ambitions. *Key Exchange*, by the way, was originally produced by an organization called the WPA Theater.

BILL IRWIN, a gifted young mime, has just completed ten public performances with the Dance Theater Workshop at the American Laboratory Theater. The show was called *Not Quite/New York* for reasons that escape me. Any other title would have been equally irrelevant since the piece was little more than an exercise in style. Mr. Irwin, an ebullient redhead with innocent features and an elastic body, bears a vague resemblance to Red Skelton. Currently trying to amalgamate dance, comedy, and pantomime, he is well trained in all three; what he has not yet mastered is the purpose for which these techniques were invented.

Irwin begins his performance running around the stage in a jump suit; soon he is joined by another identically dressed running mime. The inevitable mirror exercises follow: the two men walk in parallel, look at each other suspiciously, put on their trousers, exchange vests, juggle, do a soft-shoe number, and finally disappear through a trapdoor. A third mime appears on stage on roller skates, playing a hurdy-gurdy. The piece ends with a disco dance.

In the second part, *Pantalone and Harlequin*, Mr. Irwin plays both commedia characters, quickly transforming (inside a trunk) from a cranky old man wearing a ruff, skull cap, and black cloak into a goofy clown in multicolored patches. What action there is revolves around his effort to balance a pot-load of spaghetti on a kitchen fork. Mr. Irwin works in an honorable tradition, recalling, at times, Buster Keaton and Jean-Louis Barrault, but these moments only serve to remind us how little he shows us of their deeper resources, the way they have used silence in the service of a purer eloquence. Perhaps Irwin will learn this mystery in time; perhaps it will be provided for him by a creative collaborator. At present, however, he is still in the practice room, rehearsing before an audience a potpourri of insubstantial rituals.

David Hwang's *The Dance and the Railroad* (New York Public Theater) is a ritual, too, but occasionally promises something more. Atmospherically set against a background of raw and painted wood, rice paper drops, and a graphite floor, and bathed in pastel lights, the work is set in the 19th century during a strike by Chinese coolies working on an American railroad. Little of this is apparent from the opening scene which shows us an aristocratic young Chinaman swinging his long pigtail in huge arcs in front of a red light. The man, Lone (played by John Lone, who also directed) is an adept in the techniques of Chinese opera; he is soon joined by another less-educated coolie, Wa (played by Tzi Ma), who wishes to learn these techniques. Reluctantly, while the strike lasts, Lone teaches him. Lone is a master of transformation—he can become a duck, a big cat, a locust ("I devour whole fields—cause famine—destroy villages")—but he cannot transform the outcome of the strike which ends with the coolies having won a miserable eight dollar raise. Wa, disappointed, has no time for learning now; he will probably become an agitator. Lone, the artist, continues his practice, and the play ends as it began, with the hypnotic swooping of his pigtail.

HWANG is a talented writer and although *The Dance and the Railroad* is little more than a sketch, it is an interesting effort to merge Oriental and Western theatrical conventions. At present, the playwright is less at ease with Western idioms—Wa's proletarian dialogue is often clumsy ("Listen, I got some stuff you wanna hear") and Lone's rebelliousness is crude ("I am a white devil—listen to my stupid language"). But it is refreshing, in the midst of private rituals and technical demonstrations, to come upon some trace of a social conscience. Lurking behind the cool grace of the "dance" is the hideous specter of the "railroad" and its human exploitation—the coolies have been on a boat for 36 days, and out of 303 workers, 180 have died of exposure and malnutrition. Although the subject is one the author undoubtedly feels deeply about, Hwang's rage is oddly muted and his material is thin. If he can better balance his private and public concerns, and invest his efforts with a little more passion, then he may be able to create a ritual transformation of his own, sorely needed by an increasingly domestic the-

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ater in an increasingly synthetic society.

"The loss of a sense of the realities," wrote Nikolai Berdyaev about Russia in 1906, "estrangement from the depths of existence—this is the essence of our age; herein lies the crisis of our contemporary consciousness. This loss is perceived in all the non-physical fields of contemporary life; philosophy, politics, and art." It can also be perceived in all the nonphysical fields of contemporary American life, in the private rituals of our theater, in the escapist tendencies of our daily lives, and it suggests that we may be having something of a crisis as well.

Hannah Arendt and the Jews, Part II.

Pariahs and Politics

By Leon Wieseltier

> That was just Lamentations, it was not History. . . .
>
> —Derek Walcott

The idea of the responsible victim was conceived by Hannah Arendt to restore the honor of the Jews. Victimization is a disgrace; but there is no disgrace in action, or in taking the consequences. Arendt's view of Jewish complicity in the anti-Semitic crime ironically resembles the vulgar Zionist view which exaggerates the Jewish resistance to it. Both recoiled from the grim chronicle of helplessness that is more or less the political history of the Jews ("the extraordinary spectacle of a people . . . which avoided all political action for two thousand years"), and so they invented a past that will less fully humiliate them. Arendt and the Zionists both wished to defend the Jews against the charge—as old as the Enlightenment, and fanned back into life by Sartre after the war—that they are essentially reactive beings, whose character and destiny are the work of others. But there the resemblance stops. Arendt's account is really just another humiliation. For what honor is there in collaboration? What glory in always coming back for more? Arendt's Jews are no longer passive, they stumble no more from one calamity to another, they are answerable, at least in part, for their losses; but they act only to become pariahs, or patricians who deliver their own people to the knife.

Arendt's writings on the Jews are all an attack upon what she called "the doctrine of eternal anti-semitism." Salo Baron called this the "lachrymose view" of Jewish history. It is the martyrological reading of the Jewish past, by now a cliché of Jewish consciousness, according to which the Jews had always been "the passive, suffering object of Christian persecutions," and later of the state's persecutions, and there are surely more to come. It is the law of history that those whom the gods would destroy they first make Jewish. This "lachrymosity" is one of the principal superstitions of Jewish life, and many of Arendt's criticisms are in order. Anti-Semitism is a problem, but it is not a destiny; and it is a historical, not a metaphysical, problem. Arendt correctly remarked upon the ahistorical nature of this collective morbidity. The preoccupation with persecution, the typological construction of Jewish history according to which the Arabs repeated the Nazis, who repeated the Cossacks, who repeated the Crusaders, poses grave dangers to the political wakefulness of the Jews. They will not properly perceive their enemies, if they believe that they already know them; and they will not act, if they believe that nothing can be changed. The memory of the Jews turns up similarities, but for statecraft it is the differences that matter.

"The doctrine of eternal anti-semitism," Arendt continues, became a political ideology, the historical-philosophical foundation of a mass movement, in Zionism. In "Zionism Reconsidered," written in 1944, Arendt castigated Jewish nationalism for "presupposing the eternity of anti-semitism in an eternal world of nations, and, moreover, denying the Jewish part of responsibility for existing conditions." Zionism appealed "to this basic Jewish attitude: . . . the dangerous, time-honored, deep-seated distrust of Jews for Gentiles"; and for this reason Zionism was "irrational." The corollary of this "half-mystical" Zionist fatalism was "an utter resignation, an open acceptance of anti-semitism as a 'fact.'" It epitomized "the old mentality of enslaved peoples, the belief that it does not pay to fight back, that one must dodge and escape in order to survive." The escape was, of course, to Palestine.

Yet Zionism did not believe that anti-Semitism is eternal; such an opinion could not have moved so many Jews to conquer their despair and cross the seas. It did believe, however, that anti-Semitism is eternal, or at least indelible, in Europe. Nor did Zionism teach that "it does not pay to fight back," but that it pays to win, and the fight in Europe as it had been fought could not be won. Arendt rightly detected in the Jewish national movement a deep pessimism about Europe, and it was this that turned her against it.

> Among all the misconceptions harbored by the zionist movement because it had been influenced so strongly by anti-semitism, this false notion of the non-European character of the Jews has had probably the most far-reaching and the worst consequences. Not only did the zionists break the necessary solidarity of European peoples—necessary not only for the weak but for the strong as well. . . . The zionists would deprive the Jewish people of its just share in the roots and development of what we generally call Western culture.

Zionism was not quite as Levantine as all that; but it is true that for some Zionists the Jews did not belong among the "European peoples," and for others the time had come for the Jews, at least physically, to secede.

The great proponent of secession was, of course, Theodore Herzl, that extravagant European, whose "solution for the Jewish problem was, in the final analysis, escape or deliverance in a homeland." Herzl is the villain in Arendt's piece, and Lazare the hero. "Both men were turned into Jews by anti-semitism," she wrote, but it was Lazare who "came to realize that the real obstacle in the path of his people's emancipation was not anti-semitism." Lazare preferred that the Jews remain and do battle—against their own wealthy, the true foes, and alongside the other revolutionary elements of Europe, the true friends. It is more than a little curious that Arendt's exquisite skepticism about revolution—her work was a powerful deposition against the

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costly passion for making men over—should not have entered into her expectations for the Jews.

Arendt's analysis of the anti-Semitism—"Jewish folly and Gentile duplicity"—justified her confidence in Europe. The failure of the Europeans to overcome their hoary disdain for Jews did not shake her confidence, because in her view the Jews had to do the overcoming. Yet there could be no greater folly for Jews than to dissociate politics from memory, as Arendt recommended. Anti-Semitism may be only a problem, but it is a problem that persists. It is, as Zionism rudely suggested, "a fact," a fact that called into question the most cherished Jewish dream of the 19th century, the dream of a normal life in Europe. The Europeans reminded the Jews of their exile. Zionism, as mortified as its critic Arendt by the "ghetto mentality," did not ask, as she did, that the Jews come back for more, and hope always against hope; it was alone among the secular Jewish ideologies in owning up to the grain of historical truth in the mentality that had quieted the Jews for ages.

IN THAT sense Arendt was right when she wrote that Zionism had fallen heir to a traditional Jewish attitude. To that attitude, however, Zionism added a shocking admission of national self-interest; and so this time the memory of anti-Semitism meant business; it quickened the Jews, it did not hobble the settlers in Galilee or the statesmen in the Jewish Agency. (The foreign policy of Israel can always be located somewhere between memory and interest.) Arendt warned wisely against the self-fulfilling nature of the search for patterns in the past, against the palsying of the will by the martyrological regard for history. Yet the reluctance to bow to any general conclusions about the porousness of a culture, or of a political system, can be just as dangerous. The struggle for equality in Europe had suffered too many reverses for the Jews to go on believing that the verdict was still out. Zionism made up many myths about Jewish history, but the tenacity of anti-Semitism was not among them.

Zionism for Arendt, moreover, was still another instance of Jewish collaboration with the enemy. She was one of those detached historical thinkers (Carl Schorske is the most recent) who put into circulation the idea that Zionism has much in common with anti-Semitism; the idea has become quite a popular "irony" of history. Arendt liked to cite Herzl's blackest sentences ("it is the anti-Semites who will be our staunchest friends"), and to linger over the *haavarah* agreement of 1933 between the Jewish Agency and the Reich Ministry of Finance, which enabled German-Jewish emigrants to Palestine to get out with half their holdings, as examples of Zionism's " 'realistic' willingness to do business with foes of the Jewish people . . . and to take propaganda advantage of anti-Jewish hostility." Arendt's position in this matter is a little pure; and yet she called upon the Jews in Palestine to have dealings with Palestinians who were pledged to their destruction, some of whom were even more soiled than the Zionists for working with Nazis. It is rather mean to begrudge "realism" to a people in misery. Chaim Weizmann once startled some of his colleagues when he agreed to consider a meeting with Hitler, and he explained that to save Jews he would meet with the devil himself—*that* is the seriousness about survival that made Jewish nationalism into a powerful historical force. Herzl's remarks, furthermore, are no worse than Marx's wish that the capitalists prosper, so that the gulf between the classes grow great; those who think they are on the side of history are always opportunists. All that Zionism shared with anti-Semitism—here Arendt was bitterly on the mark—was the proposition that as a people the Jews could find no home in Europe. At times even Arendt assented to this, and proceeded to exalt homelessness.

ANTI-SEMITISM may have made Herzl into a Jew, but it did not make the Jews into a people. Zionism's repudiation of Europe presupposed a national definition of Jewish identity: and Arendt understood that beneath the political program there was an ideology of separateness. She called it "a modernization of the old myth of chosenness," though it was really no more than the psychological enfranchisement, the *amour-propre*, that attends all national feeling. Arendt did not wish to be separate. A view of history for which the fundamental distinction was between Jews and non-Jews abandoned her to company that was not of her choosing. She greeted with great excitement Jacob Katz's description of late medieval Judaism's picture of the world. Katz imputed to the Jews the view that "the difference between Jewry and the nations was fundamentally not one of creed or faith, but one of inner nature"; and Arendt deduced from this that the belief in "the alien character of the Jewish people, which . . . is the condition sine qua non for the birth of anti-semitism . . . occurred in Jewish self-interpretation first." Katz, however, meant no such thing. His subject was the inward reinforcement of a minority culture; and the indifference of that culture to the majority was a sign that it was, in its spirit, truly free. The insularity of traditional Jewish life was an expression of independence, of a robust reliance upon its own resources, which were not yet depleted by self-doubt. It was part of the Jews' entitlement as a people. Arendt saw in this pride only a provocation.

WHAT finally offended Arendt, who once called herself a Zionist, was Zionism's blunt insistence that the national identity of the Jews be made flesh in a state. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, after all, pointed to the nation-state—to the modern dogma that each nation have a state, that each state be fitted to a nation—as a main condition for the emergence of 20th-century tyranny. "The misfortune of the building of a Jewish National Home," she wrote in 1950, "has been that it was accompanied by a Central European ideology of nationalism and tribal thinking among Jews." Arendt undertook her reconsideration of Zionism in the wake of a resolution adopted unanimously by the World Zionist Organization in 1944 which presented the demand for "a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth . . . *which [shall] embrace the whole of* Palestine, undivided and undiminished."

> This is a turning point in Zionist history; for it means that the Revisionist program, so long bitterly repudiated, has proved finally victorious. . . . It seems to admit that the only opportunist reasons had previously prevented the Zionist movement from stating its final aims. . . . It is a deadly blow to those Jewish parties in Palestine itself that have tirelessly preached the necessity of an understanding between the Arab and the Jewish peoples. On the other hand, it will considerably strengthen the majority under Ben-Gurion, which, through the pressures of many injustices in Palestine and the terrible catastrophes in Europe, have turned more than ever nationalistic.

Arendt admired the agrarian romantics of Socialist Zionism for their "entirely

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unpolitical character"; she thought that the early kibbutzniks "were completely content within the small circle where they could realize their ideas for themselves," that "they were too decent for politics, the best among them somehow afraid of soiling their hands with it." And she discerned in the sterling, impractical politics of Judah Magnes and the other advocates of binationalism in Palestine a "non-nationalist tradition" in Zionism. "The main achievement of the Herzlian tradition was the Jewish State. . . . The main achievement of the [other] tradition was the Hebrew University."

THE JEWISH renewal that Arendt praised was not only sublime; it was also toothless. The sacking of the Hebrew University in the first Arab-Israeli war should have convinced her that arts and sciences are not a national defense. And she exaggerated the spiritual delicacy of Labor Zionism: as early as 1919, at a conclave of agricultural workers in Petah Tikva, the hewers of wood and drawers of water declared the final aim of Zionism to be the establishment of a Jewish state. There were politicians and intellectuals within Labor Zionism who matched Magnes's concern for reconciliation with the Arabs; they refused to surrender, however, the rudimentary ambition of political Zionism, which is that there be in Palestine an entity in which Jews remain the majority. Arendt wished the Jews to be "a boon to mankind" and "a beacon of peace" by abstaining from the community of states and resisting the allure of sovereignty. She believed that the state had become "the greatest obstacle to national survival for small nations," that she was witnessing "the catastrophic decline of the national-state system in our time." (This was an extraordinary misjudgment: the durability of that system has been dramatically proved by the proliferating small states of the postcolonial world.) But Zionism was intent upon parity for the Jews in politics, that is, upon power; and power, sometimes for worse, comes in states.

What forms of political organization, then, did she propose? In Palestine, a federation of small peoples—as if the disturbances of history are always the work of large peoples. And there was America, that other experiment in getting away from Europe, and Israel's only real competition for the future of Jewish history. Arendt's great attraction to her adopted country no doubt owed much to the fact that America was an innovation in nationalism—a state that was not fitted to a nation, but was more loosely wrapped around many national groups. In this respect the United States was also the fulfillment of the political ideal of German-Jewish humanism. Hermann Cohen, the lofty Jewish neo-Kantian of Marburg, wrote that "insofar as isolation in a nationality is necessary, it is in no way hopeless, for its realization is possible without a state of one's own"; and it was this tradition of sweet thinking, which disliked separateness and rejected the exclusiveness of the nation in favor of the fellowship of nationalities, to which Arendt was philosophically in thrall.

Cohen was sure, as Acton had been a few generations earlier, that such a democratically inflected nationalism was possible in Europe. Arendt was not so cruelly deceived. Dreyfus, and then the death camps, proved that pluralism there was a fantasy. A Jewish lobby is as inconceivable in Europe as a Jewish army. Arendt's prescription for Europe's Jews remained vague. At times she seemed to espouse a kind of progressive's Micawberism: the right revolution would turn up, allies would be found, sooner or later, whose insurrectionary energies would not be misdirected at the Jews. The *Spartakusbund*, according to Arendt's fond essay on Rosa Luxemburg, was such a moment of illumination, ended by bullets in the back, when some gifted Jews of the bourgeoisie discovered their revolutionary calling and created a camaraderie, sired as much by Lessing as by Marx, for which origins were finally a matter of no consequence. In the history of the Jews Luxemburg must surely be numbered among the few who shed their Jewishness successfully, that is, without having anti-Semitism return it to them. She and the other Jews of her "peer group" (the phrase is J.P. Nettl's) were promoted, by doctrine and by personal relations, to a higher humanity, to a small society of Jewish and non-Jewish radicals whose universalism was astoundingly genuine, who really lived as if they came from nowhere. The translated Rosa then hardened her heart to the particular hardships of the

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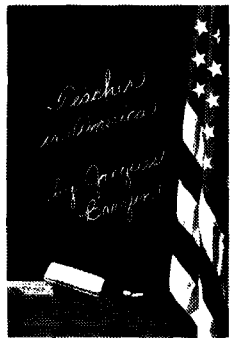

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Russian Jews; the party of humanity hears no special pleading. The woman already lived in the future.

What Arendt finally settled on for the Jews of Europe, however, was a little different, and a little less, than this millenarian exaltation. It was the condition of the pariah.

That the status of the Jews in Europe has not been only that of an oppressed people but also of what Max Weber has called a 'pariah people' is a fact most clearly appreciated by those who have had practical experience in just how ambiguous is the freedom which emancipation had assured, and how treacherous the promise of equality which assimilation has held out. In their own position as social outcasts such men reflect the political status of their entire people. It is therefore not surprising that out of their personal experience Jewish poets, writers and artists should have been able to evolve the concept of the pariah as a human type—a concept of supreme importance for the evaluation of mankind in our day.

The Jews had lost their old home, and they had not found a new home. They should, she concluded, give up on homes. They can show how much may be made of dislocation, and how little the human spirit has need of roots. The renunciation of place: that is the ministry of the Jews to the moderns.

Arendt's glorification of exile was a product of the damp, disillusioned climate of the 1940s. She belonged to a generation of displaced persons, of intellectuals whose outlook was unfairly shaped by passports and borders and other considerations that once were petty. It was natural that these intellectuals should see in extraterritoriality a kind of election. The Jews, according to Arendt, had pioneered in this supremely modern malaise; long ago their existence had been pared down to what they could carry. In 1943 she wrote ruefully of "a world in which you have to be sort of politically minded when you buy your food," but the Jews had moved in such a world for centuries. They were the heroes who had done without. And among the Jews, worthy still more of admiration, were the pariahs' pariahs, writers and thinkers like Heine and Lazare, who were banished even by their own. These men inhabited the interstices between the Christians and the Jews, and there they were left, with only their imagination, to make their way. Kafka was the climax of this "hidden tradition" within Judaism. His marginality was positively breathtaking.

But Kafka, for all his exemplary torment, was also a Zionist. The choice between the village and the castle—which Arendt shrewdly glossed as a parable of the political predicament of emancipated Jews—was for him no choice at all; he wanted an utterly new arrangement. Kafka understood, too, that pariahdom is a paltry replacement for the rabbinic tradition. The characterization of the Jews as a pariah people is only another way of defining them by what they are not, by what the others are. It reproduces the triumphalist condescension of the Christian majority for peoples who are outside. Arendt denied that the Jews were outside. She appreciated, however, that they were not exactly inside. She cared only that they remain in some essential relation with Europe, even if a relation of unrequital was all they could get. Better they be outsiders in Paris than insiders in Tel Aviv. The concept of the pariah, then, does not resolve the contradictions of Jewish life, it merely blesses them, and fixes forever the spiritual uncertainty, the psychological habits of the stranger, which lamed the whole enterprise of assimilation. It is an admission of defeat.

Arendt's analysis consigns the Jews to a permanent state of abjection. It is a counsel of despair, but there is a payoff, and it is that the Jewish difference is annulled. The Jews are apostles of an alienation that has become—no greater consummation than this—common. They are not marginal, they are exemplary. Again Arendt brings to mind the German-Jewish apologists she detested; she, too, justifies the suffering of the Jews with the claim that they have a mission to the world. The reverends apostrophized monotheism, and adduced the prophets, and argued that

DONAHUE'S SISTER

She comes level with him at
the head of the stairs
with a slight, arrogant smile
and an inward look, muttering
some injunction to her private world.
Drunk for four days now.

He's unable to get through.
She's not there to get through to.
When he does get through,
next week, it will all sound
exaggerated. She will apologize as if
all too humanly she has caused him
a minute inconvenience.

That sudden tirade last night,
such conviction and logic
—had she always hated him or
was it the zombie speaking?

Scotch for breakfast,
beer all morning.
Fuelling her private world, in which
she builds her case against the public.
Catching at ends of phrases
in themselves meaningless,
as if to demonstrate how well
she keeps abreast.

A zombie
inaccessible and sodden replacement.
He glances at her, her
body stands light and meatless,
and estimates how high he would have
to lift it to launch it
into a perfect trajectory over
the narrow dark staircase
so that it would land on its head
on the apartment-house mosaic of the hallway
and its skull would break in two
—an eggshell full of alcohol—
leaving, at last, his sister
lying like the garbage by the front door
in a pool of Scotch and beer,
understandably, this time, inaccessible.

THOM GUNN

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Jews were true Germans. Arendt apostrophized homelessness, and adduced Kafka, and argued that Jews were true Europeans. Indeed, the only true Europeans:

> The positions and functions of the Jewish people in Europe predestined them to become the 'good Europeans' *par excellence*. The Jewish middle classes of Paris and London, Berlin and Vienna, Warsaw and Moscow, were in fact neither cosmopolitan nor international, though the intellectuals among them thought of themselves in these terms. They were European, something that could be said of no other group. And this was not a matter of conviction; it was an objective fact. . . . Their fatherland was actually Europe.

Arendt demanded that the Jews, who were perched in the most exposed position of their time, become the preservers of the European tradition. Nobody else, it seemed, could be trusted. It was a lot to ask.

It is not difficult, of course, to understand this attachment to a world of metaphysics and waltzes. Arendt's allegiance to an old-fashioned principle of humanity, moreover, and the magnitude of the Jewishness which accompanied it, look rather good when compared to the preachments of certain overly racinated American Jews who demote Jewishness to an ethnic or theological tribalism. (As in this remark by Cynthia Ozick, the noted Jewish writer and cheerleader, in a recent issue of *Salmagundi*: "Mandelstam was martyred and perished because he compared Stalin's mustache to an insect; but the only thing that happened to Brodsky in *his* oppression was his allying himself with the paternal generation of his oppressors by vaguely turning Christian—joining, in short, the pogromchiks." Of course this was not "the only thing" that happened to Brodsky, but hard labor and exile offend Ozick less if the victim's Judaism is not in order.)

And yet Arendt erred exactly as they do: she did not go beyond the overheated 19th-century notion that culture is the expression of a nation. Arendt's opposition to Zionism was based upon the fear that if the Jews constituted their own nation they could be barred from the spiritual productions of other nations. They could have Rashi and Bialik, but not Mozart and Hoffmansthal. Anti-Semitism, of course, concurred. And yet the evidence was all around her, in the terrible time in which she lived, that no laws or pogroms can rob a Jew of the sonnets and the symphonies he has soul enough to possess.

Like some Zionists, Arendt could not envisage a nationalism that did not colonize every corner of life. Her abhorrence of the identification of culture with the nation-state led her to conclude that its true bearers must wander. But Zionism does not require that Jews indenture all their being to the nation. It requires a political solution to a political problem. It presumes upon no more of the spirit than is necessary to make the Jews safe. Gershom Scholem, who writes in German in Jerusalem, perfectly illustrates this unexaggerated nationalism. Scholem removed to Palestine in 1923 not least because it was only from there that he could honestly participate in German culture; his history of mysticism, which is an extended brief for the autonomous character of the Jewish tradition, drew comfortably upon Romantic theories of symbolism. Others went to the Levant to translate Kant. These Zionists did not desist from politics, and they made no religion of it.

Culture is not available to the Jew only as a pariah or a parvenu. The higher authority of beauty obtains even in a Jewish state. There are Jews who complain that they cannot listen to Bach, for being so Christian, or to Wagner, for being so German; but it is only Christianity or Germanness that they hear. (These are usually the same Jews who admire the Talmud or the Kabbalah for being so Jewish.) Assimilation, they cry, but the very word is too much a concession, because what is vital in a work of art is not its provenance; it is no more "theirs" than it is "ours." It is a grace given to anybody who can be pleased by it, and who is free to see or hear it. The Jews built a state because they had to, but it is not their state that will come between them and culture. Culture is indifferent to the state. It has bigger things to contend with.

DON'T show it to me, *please* don't show it to me. It'll only make me hate the Jews more than ever." These were the words of a woman, reported by Orwell, on being offered a book about Nazi atrocities. The idea that Auschwitz would put an end to anti-Semitism is ridiculous. It may even encourage it, for what was once only dreamed of has now been done. A threshold was crossed. Almost all the Jews were butchered, and the world went on. Anti-Semitism after Auschwitz is like a sin after the fall.

Hannah Arendt was aware that not even the death camps would discredit the hatred of Jews. She warned them that it would reappear in the Middle East: "the anti-semitism of tomorrow will assert that Jews not only profiteered from the presence of the foreign big powers in the region but actually plotted it. . . ." That is a pretty good summary of the current calumnies against Israel. It is true that Palestinian nationalism is not anti-Semitism; but it is no less true that since the revolution of 1917 no more respectable cover for anti-Semitism has existed than Palestinian nationalism. The PLO discriminates between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, and the world, not for the first time, gives credence to the moral discriminations of terrorists. But if by "racism" the UN General Assembly meant the denial of national identity to a people, and of its legitimate right to be embodied in a state, which is what the Jews are said to deny the Palestinians, then there is no more perfect example

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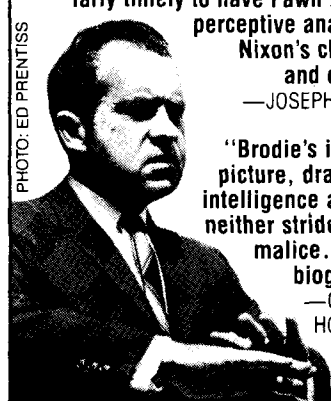

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of racism than anti-Zionism.

Jewish nationalism, of course, is not the only ground for the fight against anti-Semitism. The persecution of the Jews is an affront to the democratic idea. Yet that idea, at least in Europe, did not secure the Jews against it as effectively as a homeland. The persistence of anti-Semitism after the establishment of the Jewish state is often cited as proof of the failure of Zionism, and in this respect Herzlian nationalism did indeed fail. That failure, however, is not the shame of the Jews; it is the shame of the world. Anti-Semitism recurs whatever Jews do. It is the pornographic strain in Western politics. In Argentina it satisfies the sadism of the right, in Russia it satisfies the sadism of the left. Last spring the Russians were imagining Zionists in Poland, where there are almost no Jews.

It is not hard to be unnerved by the frequency of such an evil. That is why intellectual honesty is very much at stake in the interpretation of anti-Semitism. The intellectually unintimidated will acknowledge it without flinching, will call it by its name, will resist the sops of good sense that explain it away. Arendt was, in the matter of anti-Semitism, a humanist too easily appeased. Which is not to say that the strangeness of Jewish fate warrants an abandonment of reason, or that the intellectual must surrender his sobriety to such things as the demonic. The demonic once had a very precise meaning, but it has become the stock-in-trade of demagogues in the academy who prefer mysteries to complicated historical analysis. Anti-Semitism appears in different situations for different reasons; it is a subject for politics and psychology, not poetry. And for reason, but not for the timid or optimistic reason bequeathed by the 18th century. Reason in this age must be stretched. It must be taught new expectations. As Walter Laqueur has recently written, in a study of the common failure to believe the strangest news of all, "any rational analysis of the situation would have shown that the Nazi aim was the destruction of all Jews."

There are not anti-Semites because there are Jews, and there are not Jews because there are anti-Semites. There are peoples, and a longing for paradise. The Jews are there for when the longing goes bad, when it ends in tumbrils or in boxcars. But now they have Israel, and America, and the night vision that has always sustained them, that has helped them to believe in the best even as they know the worst, and kept them steady, and on their course, in the dark.

(This is the second part of a two-part essay.)

Writers And Revolution

The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and their Revolution 1895-1980 by Jonathan D. Spence

(Viking Press; $19.95)

Jonathan Spence's new book has a timeless quality, yet it may serve as a milestone in Western studies of China. He views the Chinese revolution through the eyes of its literary protagonists, the writers who as social rebels helped mobilize dissent. His three major figures are the activist utopian reformer of 1898 Kang Youwei (K'ang Yu-wei), the great satirist of the 1920s Lu Xun (Lu Hsun), and the woman writer Ding Ling (Ting Ling). (Spence uses the new romanization of the People's Republic; I add the older Wade-Giles forms in the hope that Chinese personalities who have emerged in the reader's mind out of the old fog of romanization will not disappear into the new fog. Romanization is of course an esoteric language known neither to the Chinese nor to the American peoples but only to the sinologists fuzzily between them.

Spence's three protagonists lived in the years 1858-1927, 1881-1936, and 1905- , and so span the modern century. Their experience, Spence says, is

> echoed by other lives—the early woman revolutionary Qiu Jin (Ch'iu Chin), the warlord soldier Shen Congwen (Ts'ung-wen), the young Marxist Qu Qiubai (Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai), the Western educated poets Xu Zhimo (Hsu Chih-mo) and Wen Yiduo (I-to), the satirical novelist Lao She and the young protester of the 1970s, Wei Jingsheng.

ALL THESE and many other writers express themselves in poems and essays that are smoothly translated; *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* rides the recent wave of translations from Chinese literature that have begun to deepen and vivify our understanding of China. Indeed the book is almost a history of China's modern literary people (*wen-jen*). For example, Spence gives a full account of the gifted poet Hsu Chih-mo whose anglophile orientation usually has been held against him; he even tracks down a brief meeting of Hsu with the young leftist Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, later to be secretary general of the Chinese Communist party. China's rather limited literary circles were surprisingly interconnected through the network of personal relations.

Aided by these translations, published and unpublished, as well as by his own talent as a translator, Spence gives us an intimate view of the quality of life among the 20th century's new class, the Chinese literary intelligentsia. Previously the literati had been embrangled with the ruling class, either as trainees for the official examinations or as stipendiaries of official patrons. Only in the first half of this century did the modern writers break free as urban individualists, and once loose in the new cities, most of them foreign-dominated treaty ports, they found themselves woefully unprotected against Chinese officialdom. Spence presents his detailed account of so many individuals' careers, especially their thoughts and feelings, within a neatly summarized narrative of events that is made more tangible by rare and excellent photographs. The whole is a signal achievement.

Spence's writers are overwhelmingly patriotic, committed to saving China as "articulate, impassioned" participants in the great debate of the age—how to bring the Chinese people and their ancient culture into the modern world. Except in the more Westernized cases like that of Hsu Chih-mo (who died young), they retain a Confucian feeling that writers have a responsibility to help society. This makes it easy for the Marxists and Mao to recruit, corral, and

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eventually tyrannize them.

The timeless quality of *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* comes partly from Spence's own interest in the literary expression of people in distress who nevertheless struggle on. His literary people speak to us on every page of his book, their voices masterfully orchestrated to convey their protests and their hopes. After surviving Nationalist oppression in the 1930s Ding Ling, for example, is rusticated in the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and winds up spending five years in solitary in the 1970s before her recent release. Writing in China is a high-risk profession.

THE inside picture this book so brilliantly conveys is shown from the point of view of the underdog. China's best literature seems biased toward protest. Mao Tse-tung's poetry is conspicuously absent from Spence's scene because, I suppose, it tended to celebrate the victory of an underdog who became a top dog with unfortunate canine proclivities. Granted that Sun Yat-sen was no poet and Chiang Kai-shek's poetry if exhumed would be trite, one still could argue that Mao in his aspirations was more directly a utopian successor of K'ang Yu-wei than was Lu Hsun or Ding Ling. Spence's chosen protagonists grow smaller in intellectual stature. Granted that Ding Ling embodies the great cause of women's emancipation, her merit lies less in a vision of social potentials like K'ang Yu-wei's than in her undaunted endurance. A similar argument could be made that Hu Shih, though no poet, continued the rational winnowing of China's literary heritage begun by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and others who also figure peripherally in this volume. Hu's contribution to enlightenment around 1920 was considerable, though his later suffering—being patronized and put down by Chiang Kai-shek—did not find literary expression. Liberals' sufferings are by nature, no doubt, less impassioned than those of rebels, and so offer less grist for Spence's mill.

This is only to say that Spence had to choose his revolutionary protagonists and he followed his artistic inclination. He shows us the revolution beginning in the 1890s in protest and hope, and so it has continued. After 90 years Wei Jingsheng is jailed in 1979 still protesting, still hoping. So what is new? What has happened in the meantime? What *was* the Chinese revolution? The Chinese Communist party, now 39-million strong, is only one of the revolution's products but today it surrounds the writer like a womb.

PERHAPS we should agree that written expression in China has been regarded less as an individual right than as a social function. Poets of old were literati, members of the small elite. Writers today still feel a social obligation to save China and its people by their writing. The state authorities, as always, agree that the writer's function is too important to be left uncontrolled. Mao's enlistment of literature and art as tools of the revolution at Yenan in 1942 was a traditional, not a revolutionary, act. Jonathan Spence is telling us that the writer's struggle to create is still imbedded and often buried in China's social matrix. Writers, including journalists, have become recognized as professionals in modern times, but their right to individualism is still questioned and severely limited.

Taken as a milestone in China studies, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* marks a much needed countertrend to the area study/social scientism that has inspired so many studies of China since 1945. Out of World War II came the mandate to analyze other societies in a multidisciplinary manner, to answer how and why they differed from us. This began with know-your-enemy studies of Germany and Japan. By the time the Carnegie Corporation and others could fund research programs, the main enemy areas had become the USSR and China. The cold war problem was to understand their springs of action, their national style, in social science terms that made them intelligible if not lovable. Whether undertaken to nurture peace or prepare for conflict, the area studies have tended to be problem-oriented and analytic more than humanistic. They laid the basis for our understanding China's modernization as interacting processes of development—variations on the theme of progress, updated now as the theme of growth and change, even if in directions of uncertain desirability. Today after 40 years of area study we have scholars of notable talent who deal with China's economy, polity, and society. Literature in translation and intimate (as opposed to formal, official) biography have taken longer to mature.

One result of the fuller use of Chinese literature will now be to bring

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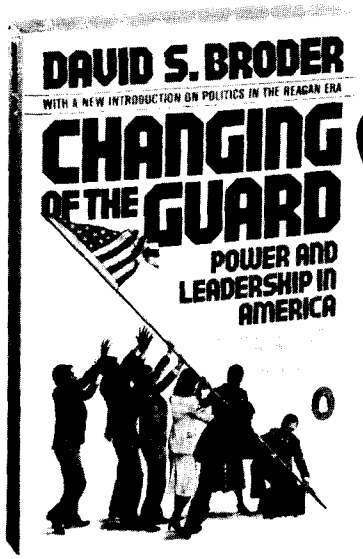
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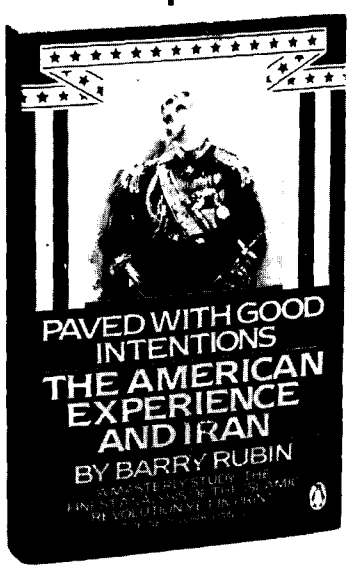

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China into the mainstream of modern world history. Spence's revolutionaries cry out to us clearly and passionately as people. Their views are no longer exotic. Not that we can now dispense with primogeniture, ritual responsibility, Confucian reciprocity, filial piety, and the other Chinese institutional props of social science analysis. When Ding Ling's mother unbinds her own feet and painfully recovers the use of them, we are reminded that footbinding—a peculiarly exotic custom—tortured hundreds of millions of Chinese girls over many centuries before the extraordinary emancipation of modern times. There is no equivalence in saying that some Western women bound their waists tightly or some African women wore nose rings. China's culture was specifically different. But today it is in our world.

The new day in China studies will unite knowledge of the exotic and other institutions of this quarter of humankind with the closer grasp of personalities that Spence sets before us. This dynamic combination will continue to make China of major interest in America. For example, the dire fate of Chinese intellectuals during the decade of the Cultural Revolution—1966-76, Mao's last years—has overtones of the Holocaust. Among a people so noted for their traditional esteem for education, how could the intellectuals be so persecuted in the abstract name of revolutionary class struggle? Understanding China grows no easier as time passes, but Jonathan Spence is adding an essential component to the effort. More than academic studies can, portraits of individuals and their experiences, never mind their ideologies, help show us what we have in common.

JOHN K. FAIRBANK

John K. Fairbank, professor emeritus of history at Harvard, has written on China since 1946.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Night Thoughts: Reflections of a Sex Therapist by Avodah K. Offit, MD

(Congden & Lattes, Inc.; $12.95)

What does a sex therapist think about after office hours are over? If she's at all like Dr. Avodah Offit, what she thinks about is sex. She thinks about ejaculation and female orgasm, about midlife sexuality and nymphomania, about homosexuality and sex in the morning. Inevitably, she muses about extramarital sexuality—for at least 60 percent of the couples who come to her for counseling include at least one partner who's engaged in it. She also thinks about what she as a clinician actually does for the distressed people who consult her. "For," she explains, "sex therapy is a fairly new field, and its practitioners have little precedent to draw on. In my office, both strategy and tactics are up to me—and that means planning, or at least thinking."

In this collection of essays, Offit demonstrates her capacity to think—and to write—about her field with clarity, wisdom, and wit. Admirers of Dr. Offit's *The Sexual Self* (and I am one of them) will find *Night Thoughts* equally engrossing, but less clinical and much more personal. She brings her own experiences to her writing. She is not only a clinician but a woman who menstruates, makes love, leaves the bed before her husband wants her to, and has her own ample set of human feelings and reactions. The voice she has found here is excellent; she manages to be open and revealing without ever losing her dignity.

Avodah K. Offit is a psychiatrist and sex therapist in private practice; she is also clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at Cornell Medical College, and a staff member at the Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic of the New York Hospital and at the Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan. Her most impressive achievement to me, however, is her ability to write about sex with affection and wonder, rather than treating it as a form of high tech. In *Night Thoughts* she reflects upon a series of topics that range from the repugnant (incest) to the somewhat quixotic (the different ways that men and women seem to view the prospect of having sex in the morning). Nowhere, though, does she seem to lose sight of the fact that sexual transactions occur between people. We have all been so affected by the spate of best-selling manuals on sex that we're inclined to consider lovemaking an impersonal, learnable set of routines—one can learn the skills in the same way and in the same spirit as one learns how to cook. It is, as Offit observes, no mistake that the title of the most popular book on sex, *The Joy of Sex*, was adapted from a very well-known cookbook.

Offit can talk about the alien or unmentionable—anal sex, impotence, masturbation, incest—in ways that are not only enjoyable to read, but also enormously clarifying. With the same expository ease, she can discuss the familiarities of ordinary lovemaking and the secret terrors and pain it can contain. In her essay on postcoital feelings, for instance, she observes that:

> What people who spend the rest of their lives together enjoy doing immediately after sex can be the cause of spoken or unspoken grievances, if they differ markedly. If they like remaining with one another, the first question is whether they wish to continue coital emotions or change the subject. Do they want to elaborate the nuances of their love, or would getting up and making a big platter of bacon and eggs be more to the point? One woman patient was at her wit's end because just as she was usually ready to tell her husband how wonderful and loving their experience had been, he would suggest a ham sandwich and beer. . . .

Ouch. And what about fantasies during sex? Are we being "unfaithful" to our partner if we like to imagine foreign scenes—which may or may not contain him or her—during periods of high excitement? Why is it that a fantasy which might be repulsive (or, for that matter, boring) to one person may bring another person to orgasm within a matter of moments? In a chapter entitled "Interlude: On Fantasy," Offit explores the uses and abuses of sexual fantasies, and talks about some of the common interpretations of common fantasies as well. A number of males with potency problems, she notes, routinely fantasize the presence of a "second man" during intercourse in order

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"to do for the woman what they themselves cannot do: have strong erections, sustain intercourse, ejaculate easily." These men often wonder whether their fantasies are homoerotic. So do the many women who, while making love, fantasize that their husbands are having intercourse with someone much younger and more beautiful. "Insecurity," says this clinician, "is a large source of pseudo-homosexual fantasy and behavior. . . ." This particular essay is a gem.

Indeed, I would say that it was among the best chapters in the book if there were not so many close contenders. I don't know of anyone else in America who writes about sex in the way that Avodah Offit does: she is the Montaigne of human sexuality.

Maggie Scarf

Maggie Scarf is the author of *Unfinished Business: Pressure Points in the Lives of Women* (Doubleday).

The Land Of Opportunity

Ethnic America: A History by Thomas Sowell

(Basic Books; $16.95)

Racial and ethnic diversity is an obvious fact of American life. The implications of that diversity, however, are a source of unending controversy. At any given moment, advanced thinking may disparage ethnic parochialism and favor assimilationist, integrationist ideas; or, conversely, may treat assimilationism as ethnic imperialism and favor the preservation of ethnic identity. What is a ghetto to the integrationist is a community to the preservationist, and the issue is sharply drawn in conflicts over busing or when efforts to integrate poor black neighborhoods are met by resistance and denounced as gentrification.

Americans tend to react to such basic conflicts of value on an ad hoc basis, without reference to the enduring issues of ethnicity in America, which testifies to the low estate of historical knowledge in our country. It is plain that there is no lack of outstanding books on the subject, most recently Stephen Thernstrom's *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Yet there has not been a single book that combines the best of recent scholarship in a readable, compact form. Thomas Sowell's *Ethnic America: A History* answers that need. Even for those who do not share Sowell's conclusions, the book establishes a valuable historical context within which to assess how and why ethnic groups succeed. It should be required reading for anyone interested in policy questions involving race and ethnicity.

A brilliant and outspoken economist, Sowell is too independent, cantankerous even, to pay obeisance to anyone's orthodoxy, which suggests why he refused a cabinet post in the Reagan administration, as well as why efforts (most recently in the *New York Times Book Review*) to portray him as a mouthpiece for Reaganism are mistaken. Sowell's views in *Ethnic America* are grounded in evidence, hard data, and thus should be disputed by providing counterevidence rather than by trying to discredit him with a label.

Ethnic America presents a comprehensive social history of nine major American ethnic groups: Irish, Germans, Jews, Italians, Chinese, Japanese, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans. While bringing together the best of primary and secondary source materials from several vast fields, the book's extraordinary merit is its application of demographic and economic analysis to historical and social materials. The tools that the accomplished economist brings to the story of the individual groups make possible a number of illuminating comparative insights.

Conventional clichés about ethnic groups, Sowell shows, have little to do with success in the American environment. Arriving destitute is no barrier to ultimate success, as most of his groups prove. Getting ahead does not necessarily depend on the group's political skills, as the experience of the Chinese and the Japanese show. Being white and English-speaking and politically skillful is no guarantee of success, as the unusually slow rise of the Irish demonstrates. Being on the frontier when it was the land of opportunity was no boon to the Scotch-Irish, now mired in poverty in Appalachia, nor was absence from the frontier a hindrance to groups who got ahead without going West. The educational panacea, used primarily by the Jews, the Japanese, and the Chinese, played its part after these groups had established themselves well enough on the economic ladder to dispense with their children's earnings. And being the object of racism and discrimination, as almost all of his nine groups have been, and even of mass internment in detention camps, as the Japanese were, does not necessarily block upward mobility.

Historical comparisons pose questions about currently popular notions. "White flight," Sowell points out, began in the 19th century as middle-class flight, when native New Yorkers moved out to avoid the influx of immigrant Irish; later the Irish "fled" to avoid the Jews and Italians. Similarly, the importance of ethnically similar role models as teachers is undermined by the observation that children of one immigrant

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group were frequently taught by teachers of the previous immigration, and that the immensely successful Japanese and Chinese rarely had ethnically similar teachers. Genetic explanations of IQ are useless, Sowell shows, since IQ data taken over time show significant change in the average scores of groups such as Italians, Jews, and Poles.

SOME of the observations made in Sowell's analysis cast fresh light on the determinants of upward mobility. In a ranking of groups by family income, the most successful groups, in order, are Jews, Japanese, Polish, Chinese, and Italians. Just above the national average are Germans, Anglo-Saxons, and Irish, and just below are Filipinos and West Indians. At the low end of the ranking are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Blacks, and Indians. Sowell shows that the differences among these groups are not simply a function of color or discrimination. Age plays an important part: Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans have median ages of less than 20 years, while the average Irish or Italian American is more than 30, and the average Jew is over 40. Cultural patterns play an important part: half of all Mexican American women marry in their teens, compared to only ten percent of Japanese American women, which diminishes the chance for education of both spouses and affects family income. The proportion of families with two or more income earners skews the comparison among ethnic groups: Japanese American families, for example, have more income earners than do other groups. When families with only one breadwinner are compared, Japanese have no consistent income advantage. Sowell illustrates the pitfalls of comparing groups: Jews, for example, from 1960 to 1970 are essentially the same people ten years older; while Puerto Ricans, who migrate from island to mainland in response to economic conditions, are not likely to include the same people at both points in time.

The relative progress of a group in its adjustment to American conditions, Sowell argues, depends on such factors as the time and place of the group's arrival; the group's attitude toward education; the relative stability of the family; the particular occupational skills that the group brings with it or develops in the American context; the response of the group to whatever opportunities or discrimination confront them; the attitudes, values, and skills that the group brings with it as part of its culture. Sowell reminds his readers that there is nothing inevitable about progress, and that people in many countries live at the same level as their ancestors. What makes for progress, he argues, is the mix between the opportunity available in the American economy and the particular human capital that the individual offers.

None of these ethnic groups, Sowell stresses, is monolithic. Each is composed of diverse elements with different experience on American soil. Blacks who are descended from West Indian families or from the pre-Civil War "free persons of color" have been notably more successful than other American blacks. Other ethnic groups are similarly composed of subgroups whose region of origin, time of arrival, or experience differentiates them one from another. Those who succeed, he argues, exhibit the values and behavior required in an industrial, commercial economy. The Chinese laundryman, the Jewish peddler, and the Japanese contract-gardener had neither technical skill nor capital, but they did have attitudes that promoted effort, thrift, self-reliance, saving, and dependability. Sowell's point is not to give ratings to cultures, but to consider what aspect of the cultural inheritance contributes to advancement: "Cultures are not 'superior' or 'inferior.' They are better or worse adapted to a particular set of circumstances."

There is nothing determinist in his argument, since he shows that most of these groups at one time were far behind in income, IQ, education, and social acceptance. Where his argument is obviously controversial is that he believes that the very traits responsible for progress—self-reliance and hard work—are undermined by appeals for government aid and special group preferences. Sowell's perspective will obviously not find universal agreement, but even those who disagree with him will nonetheless profit by reading *Ethnic America*.

DIANE RAVITCH

Diane Ravitch is associate professor of history and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the author of *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805-1973* (Basic).

COMING

Michael Walzer on Shlomo Avineri.

A SATIRE ON FEMINISM

Sauce for the Goose
by Peter De Vries

(Little, Brown; $11.95)

"She would be sitting at the window, eating fruit out of the hubcap." That's the kind of sentence you run across in a Peter De Vries novel—if one can give that name to an extended prose work that has no plot (just situations) and no characterizations (just tics and funny lines). De Vries's books are like giant towers of nougat—agglutinations of puns, metaphors, literary allusions, old songs, snapshots of people behaving, by their lights, in a perfectly reasonable manner. On this page, you hit on a tasty bit with a soft liquid center; on another, you chip off a piece of your mind.

Daisy Dobbin, who has none of the wholesome, plodding character suggested by her name, is recruited by Bobsy Diesel, an editor on a feminist magazine, to get the goods on male-chauvinist employers. In plunging necklines and "senseless shoes," Daisy sets out "with a high heart and every hope of early defilement" to court sexual harassment at *Metropole* magazine and write it up. But at an office party, while the band prophetically plays "The Tennessee Waltz," Daisy is introduced to

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Dirk Dolfin, the boyfriend of an old schoolmate and the publisher of *Metropole*. As anyone who has ever gone to a movie can guess, Daisy falls in love with the boss she is supposed to entrap, he finds her out and is dismayed, but then. . . . Well, if you want a plot, there's always Victor Hugo.

For De Vries, a story is just an excuse to pour on the jokes, lots of thick sauce over a little bit of meat. But most of the jokes are pretty good—the social-realist writers who have "sold their birthright for a pot of message," a bosomy red-nosed woman labeled a "gross-breasted rosebeak," a French chateâu where nobody will take responsibility for anything called Domblémy. Except for the cheerful, well-fed Dutch publisher, whose funny lines are all in fractured English (he says a wine has "an exquisite boutique"), De Vries's characters are an extremely distracted lot (one of them interrupts herself in the middle of a lesbian seduction to repeat an argument about the lyrics of "Music, Maestro, Please"), and are easily unhinged by obsession. Daisy's mother's grievance against General Motors results in her stealing a car (she has a good reason); Daisy's father's hatred of Mr. Ghookasian next door gets him knocked unconscious by his neighbor ("Well, all I can say is," says Mrs. Dobbin, "I hope that rock brought your father to his senses"). In the middle of a heterosexual seduction, Daisy's boss, Dog Bokum, starts to froth at the mouth when he cuts a strawberry in half, driven bonkers by its resemblance to the female pudenda ("You see? There, two ovoid cavities suggestive of the most succulent fruit in paradise. O cunning crevice: O multifoliate rose!").

Occasionally De Vries bruises our ribs with his elbow (I got the one about Domblémy the *first* time, I got it, I got it), and some of his conceits reach so far they're stretched out of shape, but most of them hit home. Even better than his fancy dancing like such little tricks as backward sentences, discontented descriptions (a restaurant table "the size of a throat lozenge"), and well-designed fretwork ("Men could be so illegible," Daisy sighs). This crazy quilt of rhetoric and randiness, language and ladies turned upside down, is stitched together with De Vrie's comic despair. "The episode had offered a fitting accompaniment to the sense of her own life being blown sky-high—or hell-deep," Daisy muses after a burglary. The housebreaker himself had somehow seemed a twisted surrogate for all the enraged and outraged of the world. Is there a sensible violence, the cop had wondered aloud. Violence was built into the universe, the cosmos ran on it. Mad atoms, colliding molecules. Maybe Christian charity was an infinitesimal aberration in a universe that gorged itself on violence. It was all versus. Mother versus General Motors, Father versus Ghookasian, her versus Dirk Dolfin. The welkin rang with versus.

De Vries himself is versus anybody who makes the relations between the sexes even worse than they are, or who lays large, greasy hands on his heroine-in-distress, the beautiful English language. So feminism is a handy target for him, though one wonders why he waited ten years after the tumult and shouting. Perhaps at the time he was too angry to laugh. Apparently, the subject still gets his back up higher than a humorist's should be. His digs about "dikes" and "lezzies" have a sour note, and remarks such as a feminist's "beating off men who weren't trying to get to her" (for once this is not a double entendre) sound flat and self-righteous. Offering the blissful sex between Daisy and her sportive publisher as evidence, De Vries hauls out the old one about a man being able to give a woman pleasure only by taking it. I'm not going to disagree with the statement itself, but I don't like the tone. This old chestnut is usually dropped by a man who explains, oh, so reasonably, "I won't do that thing because I don't like it, therefore you won't either." The solution for the woman is not to nod and roll over, but to go and find a man who likes more things. Trying to make sense out of the craziness shifting slowly over us all, De Vries sometimes crosses the line between sanity and smugness.

In the earliest days of the movies, there was something called Hale's Tours. People sat in theaters got up to look like railroad cars, and while their seats bounced gently, motion pictures of scenery unreeled. Reading *Sauce for the Goose* is a little like that. De Vries never gets you anywhere, but the wheels spin, and the sparks fly.

Rhoda Koenig

Rhoda Koenig is the book review editor of *New York* magazine.

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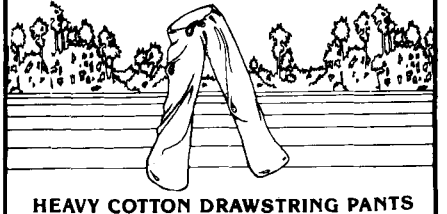

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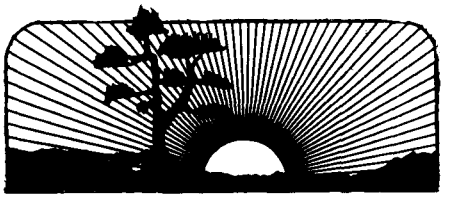

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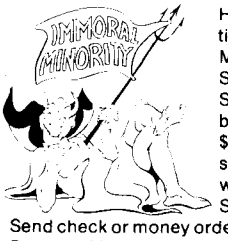

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Illusions

IN THE AWACS deal, the Administration has created one of those classical situations in which all the participants are bound to lose. If the President fails to get the proposal through Congress, he will suffer a damaging loss to his prestige; if he succeeds, he will have won a Pyrrhic victory and will use up credit badly needed for far more important matters. If the Administration fails to make good on its promises to the Saudis, it will lose much of its credibility and raise doubts about its capacity to formulate and conduct an effective foreign policy. These doubts also will be raised if the Administration succeeds in making good on its promises. If it supplies the planes, it will endanger some of its own most secret equipment by placing it in the hands of a fragile regime threatened by overthrow, subversion, or routine espionage. We have not yet been told how many trillions of dollars of research and development was compromised when the shah's American weaponry fell into the hands of the Islamic revolution and its friends. If the Israelis fail to stop the deal, they will gravely weaken their military position in the Middle East. If they succeed, they will undermine their political position in Washington, losing valuable friends and gaining vindictive enemies. And the Saudis' dilemma is worst of all. If they fail to get the equipment they have so publicly demanded, they will be left looking foolish before their exultant Arab rivals. If they succeed, they will have created new sources of discontent and new temptations for their enemies, bringing their own ultimate demise that much nearer. What the Saudis really need is an early warning system against sedition. Only the Russians can supply that, and they are not likely to give it to the royal house of Saud.

THE SAUDIS, of course, do not feel very secure, apparently not even in Mecca or Medina where they have taken to arresting Iranian Shiite pilgrims on *haj*. Not that I'd want Khomeini's chiliasts in my mosque either. The right of Moslem fundamentalists to organize chaos is a special cause of the left, probably an application of the unhinged logic of the 1930s: "Through them we come." Right now, throughout Europe and in our country, too, *gauchistes* and mindless ones (the *Nation* and Carl Rowan, for example) are furious at Sadat for trying to keep Egypt from recapitulating the experience of Iran. Throughout Iran the diverse factions of the old anti-Pahlavi front have set upon each other with a bloody intensity nobody ever imagined even the Peacock monarch capable of. As the now dead Ayatollah Beheshti once told the now exiled former president, Bani-Sadr: "Such things happen in revolution."

WHILE MOST of my friends in America were cheering the arrival in Tehran of the demented imam, I was advocating a US-backed military coup to prop up the nascent bourgeois republic. Even then it was clear that only such a government might have saved Iran from the life-consuming tragedy that has gripped it ever since the millenarians of the red and of the black were left to struggle alone for control of the country and the region it dominated. But Jimmy Carter and Cyrus Vance were in power then, and it was their failure to acknowledge the shah's precarious political position and their timidity about pursuing their interests in Iran that enabled ruthless others to seize the country. Repudiated by the American people, they have at least had the grace to be relatively silent. Apparently, however, Vance cannot resist the lure of the blue-ribbon commission. I agree with the editorial note in last week's TNR arguing that American's Tehran hostages should not have received additional compensation for the ordeal. But I find it repellent that Cyrus Vance, who was paid $197.50 for each day of commission work, should have voted that the hostage per diem be $12.50. Of course, Vance does not need his $197.50 daily wage; he is a partner at the fancy Wall Street law firm, Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett. (In any case, the elite does feed it own. Blanchette Rockefeller thought she needed the services of an ex-secretary of state to untie a snag that had developed in the transfer by the Museum of Modern Art of Picasso's Guernica to Spain.) What is $12.50 to Cy Vance? It is what he would charge his clients for three minutes of legal advice on the phone.

WHEN MEN in power have illusions, the consequences of their illusions are ordinarily visited on others. Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky has been insisting for years now that the Israelis act as if they believed what he says he believes—that the PLO is the moderate and peacefully inclined protostate of the Palestinian people. In recent weeks, events in his own Vienna have shown that the PLO can't even be trusted to respect its most craven friend in Europe: first, a pro-Israel Austrian Socialist politician is assassinated; second, the PLO representative in Austria is caught red-handed at the apex of an illegal weapons and explosives network; then, the bombing, as a Bar Mitzvah service ends, of a Vienna synagogue, with two dead and 18 wounded (Jewish dead, mind you, not Israelis or even Zionists necessarily); now, dark rumblings of a Palestinian plot against the chancellor's life. You would think these events might persuade Kreisky to give his illusions a rest. Not so. In a pathetic and rambling interview with *Nouvel Observateur*, Kreisky's view of Palestinian intentions emerges as a relic in the rubble of facts. So, too, is his view of Jews, which is personal and angry. His questioner asks, "But you are a bit Jewish?" No, says Kreisky, "My parents were Jewish. . . . I am Marxist." The questioner persists: "You are Jewish, like your dear ones in Israel. . . ." Kreisky, now furious: "No, I am Austrian; they are Israelis. This hoax of the Jewish people is one of the great deceits of life." The interviewer is unrelenting: "But for everyone Kreisky is Jewish"; and Kreisky can no longer control himself: "Another posthumous victory for Hitler, an effect of the yellow star. . . ." Kreisky is hostile to Israel because he cannot bear the thought that there is a Jewish people. Twice during the interview he alludes intimately to a brother "who lives in Tel Aviv." Kreisky lies even on small matters; I know his brother and he does not live in Tel Aviv. He lives in Jerusalem. Perhaps Arafat has forbidden Kreisky to utter the word "Jerusalem." Denial must by now be a way of life for Kreisky. In the 1920s and 1930s, many Jews said they weren't Jews, that they were Germans or Austrians "of Mosaic extraction." Some of them had a rude awakening. The others are dead, and few from natural causes.

M.P.

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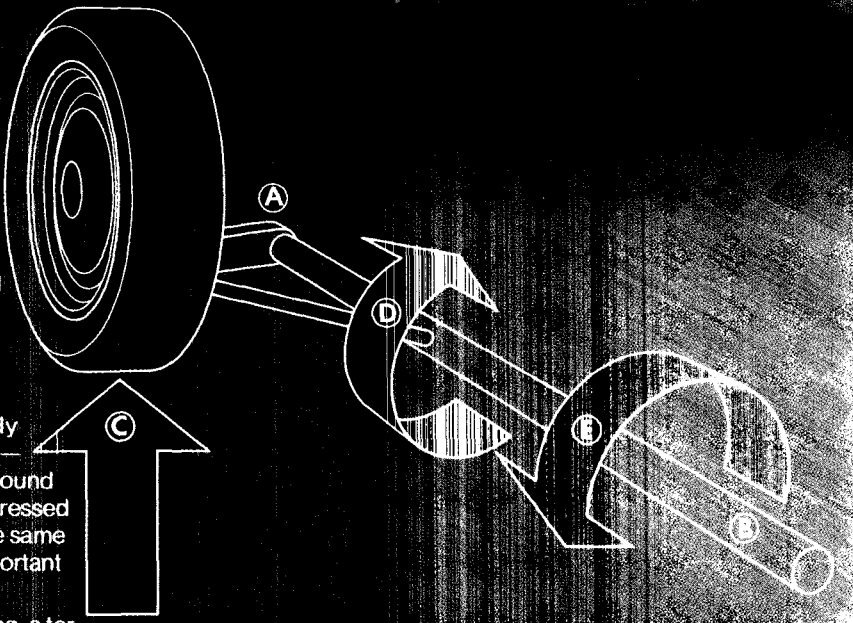

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